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Vidyajyoti

JOURNAL OF THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Priestly Formation in North India

The Context of the Hindi Region

Priests for a New Society

A Pastoral Approach to Formation

JANUARY 1982

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Editorial

It is probably true to say that Christian communities receive the priests they deserve, both in quality and quantity; hence the responsibility of all their members to create a climate in which vocations to the priestly ministry can take root and be fostered But the reverse is equally true, perhaps more so: Christian communities often are what their leaders are. An educationist once observed· "What makes a school is its headmaster A good headmaster can turn a bad school round in three months" The same might apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to priests whose ministry in the Christian communities is to lead and to inspire, to support and to encourage.

India has been blessed and continues to be blessed with many vocations to the priesthood For this we need to be thankful to God — and to our communities, those mostly which have produced them in abundance They apparently have done their part But have we done ours and are we doing it today, meaning by 'we' the priests themselves and those responsible for their formation ?

It is significant that, as she came to a new awareness of her mission, the Church of Vatican II found it worthwhile to issue a Decree on Priestly Formation This surely indicates a conviction that the renewal of the Church at large would much depend on the renewal of priests, and this in turn on the formation imparted to future priests To new times new ways !

Has then priestly formation in India been adapted to the new conditions ? Does it equip priests to cope with the demands of their ministry in fast changing situations ? The question is not new and much reflection has gone into it before; but has the thinking been adequate and has any substantial change taken place in spite of many suggestions that have been made ?

The Church in the Northen Region is being seized of the question once more, and with renewed urgency A Consultation of Staff-members of all Major Seminaries and Religious Scholasticates is due

to take place in Varanasi in February this year, preparations for which have been on the way at various levels since the beginning of last year. This number of VIDYAJYOTI hopes to contribute to the consultation.

It does not pretend to offer a blue-print for reform, nor does it cover "all the aspects" of priestly formation as, in the mind of the Bishops of the Region, the consultation is expected to do Our aim is more modest to provide some material for reflection and an orientation for decision-making *And this along three main lines* the context, the text, and the application

Fr W FERNANDES examines the context in which the Church in the Hindi Region must fulfil her mission, what this context is today and what legacy it has inherited from the past. His analysis is not limited to the Christian communities of North India, for the most part very small, but to the society at large in which they find themselves The paper shows how deep an influence sociological and other factors have exercised and still exercise on the birth and growth of these communities; these factors determine to no small extent the Christian mission and that of the priest

In the context of the quest for a new society and of the struggles of people to bring it to birth, Fr J NEUNER asks what is the specific role of the priest. Surely he may not remain entrenched in the security of traditional patterns of Church life, for he must be with the people. But what will his own involvement consist of ? Not in replacing the laity whose proper function it is to infiltrate the whole gamut of secular and social realities with the values of the Gospel The priest will encourage, influence and support persons and movements actually engaged in the struggle Like Jesus himself, he will bear witness to the Kingdom of God that is breaking through in the world, while at the same time transcending it

His task, if he would respond to it, is not easy It never was and does not promise to be in the future How then should seminarians be trained for it in the present context of North India ? Fr Subhash ANAND indicates some presuppositions for any fresh planning of priestly formation, keeping in mind the changing conditions and the needs of the local situation

Priestly Formation in the Hindi Region

Walter FERNANDES, S.J.

ONE of the questions asked in an inquiry among priests conducted by the CBCI in preparation for the 1971 Synod of Bishops was "In India should we not think of a more Indian way of forming our priests ?" The answers to this question showed that the vast majority believed that there should be an Indian way of forming priests but there was great difference of opinion on what it meant Most thought only in cultural terms but felt that a deeper study should be made in order to answer this question.[1]

It is in this spirit of search that the Hindi Region Bishops' Conference (Patna, March 1980) reopened the question about the role of the Church in the North and its implications for the formation of priests in the region. The present article, which is part of the same search, takes for granted an earlier study presented at the above meeting. That paper[2] viewed the Hindi region within the historical perspective of the socio-political forces that have formed it We shall now proceed to the next question What has formed the Church in the region, and what type of people form it now ? We shall then try to reflect on the type of priests required to serve these people For Vatican II has described the priests as persons called by God from among his people to serve then and at the same time be sharers in the apostolic authority of the bishops (*L G* , n 28) They are to be the symbols of unity in the Church which is described by Paul VI as the Announcer of the Good News (*E N* , n 14) — a Good News which includes a message of liberation (*E N* , n 30) The task assigned to the priests is to form and lead the priestly poeple, they are to take their achievements and failures to God in the Eucharistic sacrifice and to proclaim to them the message of the Word (*L.G* . n. 10)

The Document on "The Ministerial Priesthood" of the 1971 Synod of Bishops, in its Introduction, mentions some of the difficulties affecting the exercise of the priestly ministry in recent years Among the problems

1 *Priestly Ministry* (New Delhi CBCI, 1971), p 30.
2 Walter FERNANDES, "The Hindi Region Situation and Its Implications for the Church", VIDYAJYOTI, October 1980, pp 416-431.

priests face, the Synod mentions the fact that the methods they use may be obsolete and little in keeping with the modern mentality (n. 1). Many priests feel that, within a context of secularisation, they should "sanctify worldly activities through an immediate action" (n. 2) and "contribute to the common efforts to build a more just and more fraternal society" (ibid.) Others ask themselves the following question "What methods should be used so that sacramental practice may be an expression of faith really affecting the whole of personal and social life, in order that Christian worship be not reduced to a mere external ritualism ?" (n 3) More radically the question is being asked "Is not the Church today too remote from its origins to be able to announce the Gospel to the men of our times in a credible manner ?" (n. 5).

The mission of the Church to announce the Gospel, and the questions which this mission raises in our own situation, form the context of our reflections on the role of the priest in North India. We shall discuss the present trends in the Hindi Region as a whole and situate the Christian communities and the priests within this total context.

I. *The Christians in the Hindi Region*

Who then are the people whom the priest in the Hindi Region has to serve ? To begin with the Christians, one needs to bear in mind that the Church in the region is very young, having been born only in the 19th century. Though the Jesuit mission was called to Akbar's Court, and continued in the Mughal empire till the suppression of the Society of Jesus in 1773, their success at the imperial court was practically null and little was done outside.[3] There may have been some Christian communities in the North, but only the group of Christians in Bengal is sufficiently documented. There is very little documentation on the Hindi Region.

The French and later Italian Capuchins are the ones who built up the Church in the region. Till the 18th century, their only intention in coming to North India was to use it as a halting place on their way to Tibet. Chandernagore and later Patna became such bases. From these small beginnings the North Indian mission grew into a Church catering mostly to the poor.

Unlike Protestants, Anglicans in particular, who began by attempting to convert the upper castes through their schools, Catholics in the Hindi Region seem to have made little effort to win over the upper classes. By the time the Capuchins got reconciled to the fact that the Tibetan mission was not as accessible as they had hoped and decided

3. Edward MACLAGAN, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul* (London Burns and Oates, 1932).

to evangelise the territory assigned to them in the North, the Protestants themselves had realized that success among the upper classes would be extremely limited. Alexander Duff who advocated the opening of English medium schools met with some sucess; but it was limited, though till the end he and others remained convinced that once English education brought the Indians face to face with their superstions, they would accept Christian teachings. They took for granted that once the upper classes accepted the message of Christ, their faith would filter down to the other classes [4]

These were the missionary's interests The people had different interests The Upper castes who frequented the schools thought primarily in terms of better jobs and of integration into the colonial administrative system, not in terms of change of religion They were the dominant class and had nothing to gain and everything to lose by becoming Christians Consequently, conversions from these groups were few and far between They could come over only as individuals and were usually declared outcastes.

The experience of the American Presbyterian mission in UP and Punjab was similar Initially they concentrated only on the upper castes who, they felt, could make an individual commitment to Christ after understanding his teachings Later, however, they realized that the prospects of converting the upper castes were very dim and concluded that if only the converts-to-be had faith in Christ and repentance for sins, the rest would follow [5]

It is at this juncture that the Catholic missionaries entered the field and tried to convert the "low castes" and other hitherto neglected sections of society These groups too were in the process of change as a result of eight centuries of Muslim rule in the area and of British colonial inputs such as commercialisation The Bhakti Movement had given some hope to the oppressed sections, and in Punjab Sikhism was born as a result of interaction with Islam This was both a reaction to Muslim presence and a mode of reforming Hinduism, especially the caste system Equality of all groups was one of its fundemental tenets [6]

On the other hand, a conservative reaction had also set in as a result of Muslim presence In Punjab for example, in order to protect

4 Melvin LAIRD, *Missionaries and Education in Bengal* 1793-1837 (Oxford Oxford University Press, 1972), pp 7-27

5 John C B WEBSTER, *The Christian Community and Ckange in Nineteenth Century North India* (Delhi Macmillan, 1976), p 45

6 N G BARRIER, "In Search of Identity Scholarship and Authority Among Sikhs in Nineteenth Century Punjab", in Robert I CRANE and Bradford SPANGENBERG (eds) *Language and Society in Modern India* (New Delhi Heritage Publishers 1981), pp 2-4

themselves from Islam, the Hindus "tightened their social structure, which was already rigid and had little room for flexibility " [7] Elsewhere, the Bhakti Movement, which initially was spearheaded by persons like Namdev and others belonging to the "low castes", was slowly coopted by the Brahmins. They tried to introduce some marginal reforms in order to appease the low castes who were in revolt, without, however, giving up their own dominant position[8].

The British, who extended their rule to the Hindi Region in this conflictual situation, needed the collaboration of the dominant sections in order to control the rest of the Indian population This would be done partly by distributing land to the *jagirdars* and *thikedars*, thus turning them into *zamindars* who would be the source of tax revenue, and partly by integrating the upper classes in the administration and in the army through education and the military regiments.

Also a few Scheduled Caste groups like the Mahars managed to get into the British army, being recruited by the East India Company in Bombay, later they were given greater importance because their regiment did not join the 1857 revolution.[9] But there were very few such cases in the Hindi Region. By and large the "low castes" lost out as a result of the British inputs since the *jajmani* system was weakened in many areas of the North This was a system of economic interdependence and division of labour in which land was owned by one caste (not by individuals) and services such as agricultural labour were divided among all the castes The landowning caste was obliged to distribute grain to all the families, its quantity depending not on the amount of work but on the status of the family in the caste hierarchy[10]

Occupations were hereditary and made no allowance for mobility or promotion from one caste to another In that sense, it was an unjust system, especially as far as the "Untouchables" were concerned. The caste system itself was mobile in the sense that a whole caste was able, over a generation or two, to move up to a higher place within the caste hierarchy However, this possibility was open only to what are known as the middle castes The "Untouchables" were excluded from this upward mobility. Yet, while being unjust, the system

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7 Prem Raman UPRETY, *Religion and Politics in Punjab in the 1920's* (New Delhi Sterling, 1980), p 11

8 G S GHURYE, *Caste and Class in India* (Bombay Popular Book Depot, 1957), pp 108-113

9 S K THORAT, "Occupational and Social Mobility Through Rural-Urban Migration A Case of Scheduled Castes of Maharashtra", in Jose KANANAIKIL (ed), *Scheduled Castes in India Strategies to Empower the Marginalised* (New Delhi: Indian Social Institute, forthcoming, 1982)

10 Santokh Singh ANANT, *The Changing Concept of Caste in India* (New Delhi: Vikas Publications, 1972), pp 16-24.

provided the oppressed sections with the minimum material security, though with no possibility of liberation The Bhakti Movement finally opened this posibility within the system

But the British inputs, such as commercialisation, also weakened the *jajmani* system in areas where the colonial impact was mostly felt. All groups felt this impact, but the "Untouchables" experienced its most adverse effects The weakening of the *jajmani* system deprived them of the minimum material security they had had, without any gain to their social status Those like the Mahars who did not have any skills migrated to areas outside the villages and, apart from those who managed to get absorbed into the colonial system through the army, most of them were thrown into greater insecurity

Together with the weakening of the *jajmani* system, the British need to induct the dominant sections into the administration dealt a blow to the Bhakti Movement which for the 'Untouchables' had been the only hope of liberation within the system Only an external agent could now act as catalyst of change, whenever the historical moment would arise Such a moment arose through the further weakening of the *jajmani* system because of the commercial inputs The missionaries could work as the external catalyst agent, if they were prepared for the task While depriving the 'Untouchables' of their material security without changing their social status, the weakening of the *jajmani* system had also freed them from the system that perpetuated their oppressive state. Now they were free to seek liberation elsewhere; they could look for a catalytic agent to facilitate change in their society.[11]

This is where the interests of the missionaries and those of the 'Untouchables' coincided If the missionaries were able to respond to the aspirations of these oppressed sections, they could provide them with the opportunity of seeking liberation outside the Hindu fold Whether the missionaries responded to these aspirations or not, depended in each case on their own background But, whatever their background, the missionaries viewed their work from a purely evangelical point of view of 'saving souls' and were prepared to work with those groups that seemed the most open to the message they were preaching

There were, however, differences between the Catholic and the Protestant missionaries. The latter came by and large from the North European countries which had felt the impact of the Enlightenment and of the egalitarian ideology of the 18th century political revolutions.

11. Walter FERNANDES, *Caste and Conversion Movements in India Religion and Human Rights* (New Delhi Indian Social Institute, 1981), pp 22-24

These currents valued the individual more than the group As a result, these missionaries were opposed, both to the caste system as *being unjust, and to mass conversions as an offence against individual* decisions Eventually, however, the need to 'save souls' prevailed and they softened their position on caste.

The Catholic missionaries, on the contrary, came by and large from the more traditional Latin countries of Southern Europe or from others like France in which the post-Napoleonic revival had set in. This was for the most part a papal and monarchical revival which ideologically gave greater importance to the group than to the individual. The missionaries considered the monarchical States as the natural social order and, when they came to India, they viewed the caste system as a case of legitimate stratification, similar to the division they found in their own countries [12]

Among many other causes, the attitude of the missionaries would be a major factor in the conversion movement Missionary effort in India was the strongest at a time when the sense of insecurity among the 'Untouchables' was the highest and caste movements had taken a religious turn The 'Untouchables' were prepared to join any religious group that preached equality As a result Islam, Sikhism and Christianity — and later the Arya Samaj that coopted the idea of equality in its effort to reform Hinduism — got many adherents from among the 'low castes' [13]

That explains why Protestants met with greater success than Catholics, for they tried to disallow caste, though they compromised with it at a later stage Though both Protestants and Catholics viewed the situation from a purely evangelical point of view, the downtrodden thought of conversion as a mode of liberation from their oppressed state:

> The consequence is that whereas Roman Catholic strategy was directed largely towards group conversions, the Protestants who looked for individual decisions attracted more mass movements, for the tolerant Roman attitude to the caste system made conversion to Catholicism a less plausible escape from that system than conversion to Protestantim [14]

However, towards the end of the century, social thinking had progressed at least in some sections of the Catholic Church in European

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12 G A ODDIE, *Social Movements in India. British Protestant Missionaries and Social Reforms* 1850-1900 (Delhi Manohar, 1978), pp 30-33

12. Ursula SHARMA, "Status-Striving and Striving to Abolish Status The Arya Samaj and the Low Castes", *Social Action*, July-October 1976, pp 219-226

14 Donald B FORRESTER, *Caste and Christianity Attitudes and Policies on Caste of Anglo-Saxon Protestant Missions in India* (London Centre of South Asian Studies University of London, 1980), p. 73.

countries. That explains how Fr Constant Lievens was able to follow a different approach among the Chotanagpur tribals. The situation in that region was similar to that of the 'low castes', except for the fact that the tribals did not form part of the caste system and owned land Discontent reigned among them, consequent upon the introduction of land-tax. Their situation deteriorated when the British rulers, taking for granted that landlordism, the common form of ownership in their own country, represented the natural social system, turned the *jagirdars* and *thikedars*, who were in fact tax collectors, into *zamindars* i e, into landlords of the areas on which till then they only had tax rights The tribals, whose independence, self-respect and human dignity were closely linked with their land, saw their very identity destroyed. Loss of their land jeopardized their family, culture, religion and their whole social life A total crisis entered their life [15]

Though the otherwise peaceful tribals revolted against this injustice, they could not stand up to the British and zamindari machinery that suppressed their uprisings mercilessly That is where Christianity functioned as a means of re-adaptation to the changed circumstances The Belgian Jesuits who arrived in 1869 began to meet with success only a decade later when Fr Constant Lievens, under the guidance of a Hindu official, started redressing their grievances Some others, like Fr J B Hoffmann, probed their land tenure system and were to a great extent instrumental in the enactment of the 'Chotanagpur Land Tenancy Act' [16] The Chaibasa area, which did not feel the effects of British presence in the 19th century as much as Ranchi and its neighbourhood, began to experience the problem of displacement with the beginning of the steel industry at Jamshedpur which displaced over forty villages, and the coal and steel mines that left many more thousands homeless This is when one notices the beginning of a conversion movement in the Chaibasa area [17]

What this shows is that whether the converts were few or many, the Church in the Hindi Region was born as part of the search of the oppressed for liberation from their inhuman condition Religion played an important role in this search for social liberation One cannot easily accept the accusation made on the North Indian converts of being

15 Fidelis DE SA, *Crisis in Chotanagpur* (Bangalore Redemptorist Publications, 1975), pp 33-40

16 Walter FERNANDES, *The Indian Catholic Community Its Peoples and Institutions in Interaction with the Indian Situation Today* (Brussels PMV, Asia-Australia Dossier 12-13, January 1980), pp 17-18.

17 Detlef SCHVERIN, "The Control of Land and Labour in Chotanagpur 1853-1948", in D ROTHERMUND and D C WADHWA (eds), *Zamindars, Mines and Peasants Studies in the History of an Indian Coalfield* (New Delhi Manohar, 1978), p 52.

"Rice Christians" What is important to bear in mind today is that *the priest must be formed in such a way as to be able to understand and respond to the aspirations of those who seek liberation from oppression* These aspirations may sometimes be mixed with less noble motives But before passing a value judgment on the search for freedom of various groups, the priest should be able to understand the degree of oppression these groups experience in their everyday life.

II. *The Society at Large*

The Christians themselves are but a small section of the society in which they live The values of society at large influence them and the actions of the dominant sections may have great impact on their work The paper mentioned above studied the region in a historical perspective, tried to understand the dynamics behind the communal divisions, the strengthening of the dominant castes within the Green Revolution context, and the role played by symbols such as language in caste and communal cleavage Without repeating what has been said there, we shall try to understand the present trends.

Three main aspects can be mentioned· The first is the strengthening of commual cleavages, the second is the hold the dominant sections have over all leavers of power, and the final aspect is the extremely weak situation of the Scheduled Castes and tribals and the increase in atrocities perpetrated against them

The background for the communal cleavage has been given earlier The present events, especially the movement for Khalistan and the communal riots in Moradabad, Jamshedpur, Aligarh, Biharsharif and elsewhere, only strengthen the earlier analysis The Freedom of Religion Acts, all of which have a communal image, need to be viewed as one more facet of the same movement that can lead to confrontation between communities The roots of these events must be found primarily in the economic deprivation of a few groups within the context of an economy of shortages Some communities with a monopoly over certain aspects of life feel deprived when they see their privileged position vanish Such, for example, may be the case with the Sikhs who enjoyed a dominant position in the armed forces at Independence but whose proportion in the army has diminished since then

This diminution of domination may not by itself be something to be sorry about But when a dominant position is threatened, those who have enjoyed the benefits of power may react to their diminished status by playing on feelings of communal or caste solidarity. Among

the Sikhs, for example, through a series of historical events, objects, such as the *kirpan*, have become symbols of religious solidarity. When a community is a minority group, it may feel insecure. If it feels strong enough to react, it may take an aggressive stance as the Sikhs have done, or may fall on the defensive, as the Christians and to some extent the Muslims have done.

The dominant sections among the Sikhs have been the beneficiaries of many modern inputs, such as the Green Revolution and even education They have taken the initiative in opening more schools, and other institutions that can give members of their community entry into the professional and administrative sectors Simultaneously, they have found solidarity in their religious symbols and in their feeling of being a minority

The Muslims on the contrary, and to some extent the Christians. have found a sense of solidarity in a defensive posture The Muslims have shown this attitude by opening schools meant only for their own community and teaching only Urdu which is considered the language of the Muslims. This, together with the discriminatory attitude of many in the administration, has had the effect of keeping them away from many positions of power. Their numbers in the higher echelons of the administration, the armed forces and, for that matter, even in the lower ranks of the police force, are negligible. This feeling of discrimination has been intensified by the events that accompanied partition, the Muslim resurgence in recent years and the move of some oppressed sections to seek liberation through a change of religion. Christians may be giving expression to the same attitude by trying to influence the dominant sections by opening schools to cater to them

While the communal sections among the Hindus view all these events as a threat to the religious domination of the traditional Brahminic values such as caste, the crucial element may be the upcoming landowning middle level castes who have received most benefits from recent technological educational, administrative and other inputs. For many decades these groups felt dominated by the Brahminic elements that are strong in the communal parties. Today, as they have grown strong economically and have captured power by state policies, they feel threatened by anyone who demands a better deal in the social or economic field.

The demands of the Muslim and Sikh communities and the conversion of the Scheduled Castes seem to be viewed by the upcoming castes as a threat to their domination

Though the communal riots have emotional overtones and reflect prejudices between religious groups, the feeling of being deprived

of a just share of jobs seems to be a strong motivation among the Muslims. The Hindus, on the other hand, seem to feel threatened by competition from this numerically strong and politically important group Political needs of certain parties and inter-party as well as personal conflict within the parties find a ready material in the grievances of these groups The subservience of the Scheduled Castes and tribes, many of whom are their bonded labourers, is essential for the prosperity of the landowning groups Hence today the strongest opposition to any change in the status of the weaker sections and even the communal demands seem to come primarily from these groups. When the oppressed sections attempt liberation through conversion, the same groups react by rallying others and appealing to their emotional communal feelings The socio-economic interests of the landowning groups seem to be the strongest factor in the suppression of all Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes movements.

The strength of the upcoming castes is seen mostly in two events, viz , the failure of the Jai Prakash Narayan Movement and the atrocities on the Harijans Unlike the Scheduled Castes in Gujarat and Maharashtra who, though weak and on the losing side, were able to fight a prolonged battle with those who kept them down, the weaker sections in the North, though waking up to the reality of their oppression, are unable to organise themselves owing to lack of leadership among them and of other support such as education and financial backing The weaker sections found some hope in the JP Movement. But studies have shown how because of the very dynamics of the movement the "Total Revolution" that had begun with demands for an end to corruption, freedom from caste and respect for the weak, slowly narrowed down its objectives to purely political aims, and was methodically captured by the same vested interests that had kept the downtrodden within their clutches for centuries

III. *The Weaker Sections*

This is one of the major challenges the priest of tomorrow will have to face One notices a methodical suppression of the scheduled Castes and Tribes The Gua firing where over a dozen tribals were killed because they were demanding their just share in the forest economy on which they had survived for centuries, the atrocities perpetrated on the Scheduled Castes at Belchi, Pipra, Deoli and elsewhere, and the frequent communal riots are only the extreme symbols of the daily oppression which these groups are experiencing Unlike in Tamilnadu where the government was forced to appoint a judicial commission of inquiry after the Villupuram atrocities (though its objectivity is ques-

tioned by many), the Scheduled Castes in the Hindi Region are so weak that ordinarily only a perfunctory departmental inquiry is all that they get. After the Deoli incident, the chief minister of the State rushed to state that it was not a caste war but a private revenge.[18]

In other words, because of a slow awakening among the Scheduled Castes and Tribes and the threat made by some of them to seek liberation through religious conversion, there seems to be a definite determination on the part of the dominant sections to suppress what they consider a threat to their domination. This suppression may take the form of communal hatred of other communities by the Brahminic elements and murder and bondage of the Scheduled Castes by the landowning groups who need cheap labour for their prosperity.

Also the Freedom of Religion Bills have to be viewed from this point of view The response to the O.P. Tyagi Bill from the Christian Community was overwhelming. As an analysis of the situation showed, though it was labelled a "private member's bill", it could not be taken as an isolated event, but as one more small step in an otherwise methodical march of the communal elements and other vested interests during the last three decades. The previous steps had been the Niyogi Report, the MP and Orissa and other Freedom of Religion Acts, and other instances of discrimination against the weaker sections.[19]

As the above analysis has shown, after the emotional outburst during the anti-conversion bills demonstrations, it is important for us to study their implications. One aspect that needs to be noted is that these Acts come up primarily in states where the feudal elements are strong The princes started entering into politics in Orissa in the 1960s and others followed in Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Gujarat.[20] The Freedom of Religion Acts have followed the same route The first among them was enacted when a former maharaja was the chief minister of Orissa, and the second in Madhya Pradesh when a communal-minded landlord was the home minister. Even members of the then ruling United Front viewed these actions not as communal acts meant for the protection of Hinduism, but as a way of keeping the Scheduled Tribes and Castes under the control of the landowning groups Consequently, in MP and elsewhere, the Socialists who were part of the UF, but had their base among the tribals, opposed the Bill, even while remaining within the government.

18. *The Hindustan Times*, November 21, 1981.

19 Eugene D'SOUZA, "Rethinking Mission Policies", VIDYAJYOTI, November 1979, p. 464.

20. For more on the role of the princes see William L. RICHTER, "Princes in Indian Politics", *Economic and Political Weekly*, February 28, 1971, pp. 535-541

These trends of suppressing the weaker sections can be expected to continue. The preparation of the future priest must be viewed within the need for him of being able to cope with these demands. The 19th century converts joined the Church as part of their search for liberation. It may be important to ask ourselves whether the formation as given today to future priests prepares them to respond to such aspirations. This will become all the more important in the context of the greater suppression of the weaker sections that may result from their waking up to the reality of their situation.

One important question that needs to be asked in this context is the reason for the paucity of priests of local origin Except for the tribals in Bihar and Madhya Pradesh and a few older Christians in the Bettiah area, one finds only a few dozen priests of local origin in the whole of the North. Moreover, the same exceptions being made, even the seminaries in the region have less than fifty seminarians hailing from it. In other words, there seems to be very little hope in most of the region of getting a local clergy for a long time.

Immediately after Independence it was taken for granted that the Church in India must live up to Leo XIII's mandate, "Thy Sons, India, are Thy Salvation", and recruit as many Indian priests as possible. The Church in India as a whole has been extremely successful in this effort and has been able to make up within three decades for many decades of negligence in building up an Indian clergy and hierarchy. The fact remains, however, as pointed out above, that in most of the Northen region there still is a great dearth of local priests.

The Church being part of society at large, the regional feelings that are prevalent in the country also enter the Church At the moment we need not go into a discussion of whether this feeling is a positive or negative factor, for valid arguments can be advanced to uphold both points of view. What one needs to remember is that the priests and religious in the North hail mostly from the South and the West. The next question that can be asked is whether those coming from outside the region are able to understand local aspirations and really prepared to work for the growth of a local clergy.

One of the points raised by Archbishop Eugene D'Souza in his analysis of the O P Tyagi Bill was the type of weightages in the work of the Church in the North. This seemed to be in favour of non-Christians and it looked as though Christians have been neglected to some extent.[21] *The paucity of priests may itself be a sign of this neglect and*

21 Eugene D'SOUZA, loc. cit., pp 466-469

of the importance given to an educational and pastoral system which the local Christians are unable to cope with.

Concurrently, one may ask a question about the attitudes of the priests hailing from outside the region towards local Christians. Discussion with a few of them[22] would indicate that their attitudes towards the possibility of a local leadership and local clergy may not be much different from those of many foreign missionaries in the past towards having Indian priests Discussion in the 19th and early 20th century finds a big section of the foreign clergy stating that Indians would have problems with celibacy, that they would not be good leaders, that their own people would put more trust in outsiders, that they were new Christians, that their faith was not deep enough, that they might still be having many superstitious beliefs and might not be able to control similar beliefs in their communities, etc. In the above-mentioned discussion with the present-day clergy, the persons concerned gave almost identical reasons to explain why there are not more local priests and to state that there cannot be many in the near future Obviously, these are not conscious decisions but rather unconscious sentiments and attitudes.

The aspirations for liberation with which the Christians joined the Church have to be viewed within the context of these attitudes This may be an opportunity for the Church in North India to examine these attitudes It may also be necessary to ask whether the present type of formation is suited to the people of the region. The priest is chosen from among the people to serve them His service is not limited to Christians only, but extends to all men As *Evangelii Nuntiandi* states, evangelisation does not merely consist in the proclamation of the Gospel, but includes the transformation of the whole man and his culture.

> For the Church it is a question not only of preaching the Gospel in ever wider geographic areas or to ever greater numbers of people, but also of affecting and as it were upsetting, through the power of the Gospel, mankind's criteria of judgment, determining values, points of interest, lines of thought, sources of inspiration and models of life, which are in contrast with the Word of God and the plan of salvation
>
> . what matters is to evangelise man's culture and cultures in a vital way, in depth and right to their very roots (*E N*, nn. 19-20).

Also the 1973 CBCI consultation on evangelisation states that today our evangelical work cannot be viewed merely in terms of proclamation of the Word but must also be viewed as liberation.

22 *This is based on a discussion in small groups with about 70 priests from eight dioceses in the Hindi Region and about 25 seminarians from ten dioceses.* Numerically they are not representative of the region. However, the near unanimity of views may be a sign that these are commonly held.

> Church authorities should fully encourage and support those who are called by the Spirit to special tasks of liberation and development among the poor and the oppressed In our work of development and liberation, as a rule, we should collaborate with the government and other responsible agencies and not work in isolation or in competition. The Church in India should realize that part of her prophetic role is to denounce the evils of society, and sometimes even protest against the bottlenecks, structure blocks. . .[23]

The priest needed for tomorrow will be one who is able to become part of this process of liberation — one who understands the culture of silence of the oppressed sections, increasingly suppressed by the dominant groups He should be one who thinks of himself as a catalyst of change and transformation among his people.

Hence his formation will have to be deeply rooted in the local situation and culture, especially the culture of the oppressed. Indianisation, ecumenical dialogue, etc, will find a new dimension in a dialogue with groups working with the oppressed sections without necessarily having any Christian titles Ecclesiology should stress the study of the local Church and the aspirations of the weaker sections. The Eucharist would find a better expression if understood as the meeting point of the joys and sorrows of the oppressed. Reconciliation and penance must be geared to the demands of justice. The meaning of Christ, his death and resurrection in the struggle for full humanity and human rights needs to be stressed. Theological formation must equip future priests to deal with the changing role of the weaker sections and to build up local leadership.

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23 *Light and Life We Seek to Share All-India Consultation on Evangelization* (Patna CBCI, 1973), p 372

The Priest's Role in the Quest for a New Society

J. NEUNER, S.J.

Ever since Vatican II priesthood has been in a crisis Not that there were no problems before, for certainly there were. The traditional and official self-understanding of the priest had been handed down from the Middle Ages over the Reformation into modern times without its biblical and theological foundations being seriously examined Confronted with Luther's challenge, the Council of Trent had been "content with proclaiming strongly the existence of the sacrament of Order as ordained to the celebration of the Eucharist, it did not take up the problem of the significance of the priestly ministry in its theological and spiritual depth"[1]

After Vatican II problems came to the surface because the Council, having opened new perspectives for the life and mission of the Church, also initiated a renewed understanding of the priestly ministry which demanded a thorough re-orientation Though the Conciliar texts on the priesthood[2] are less significant that the Council's doctrine on bishops and laity, they nevertheless do give valuable orientations. Still, even in the judgment of the International Theological Commission the present situation "calls for a thorough theological re-appraisal of the theological doctrine of ministries, going far beyond the timid re-evaluations inscribed in the Conciliar documents".[3]

The Crisis

Various factors have been pointed out which led to the post-conciliar crisis: problems of faith and spirituality, conflict with Church-structures, pastoral frustration, the inroads of secularism. The common denominator in these factors seems to point at the basic option of the Council for a radical revision of the Church's relation to secular realities. The Council takes the world seriously: secular sciences have

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1 *The Priestly Ministry*, Report of the International Theological Commission, 1970, Theological Publications in India, 1971, p 16

2. Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, n. 28, Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, *Presbyterorum Ordinis*; Decree on the Training of Priests, *Optatam Totius*

3. *The Priestly Ministry*, p. 4

their rightful autonomy; secular realities such as economics and social structures follow their own laws The Church is not omniscient; she is teacher only in so far as God's word is entrusted to her. In the actual understanding of the world and in the renewal of society she cannot simply dictate rules but has to enter into dialogue with the sciences and socio-political forces

Traditional or Progressive?

The new self-understanding of the Church as sacrament of salvation for the world and the Council's concern with many spheres of secular life bring about a crisis in the life of the Church, most of all in the ministry of priests The traditional static concept of the priest as leading the faithful with secure authority on the path to salvation, is being shaken According to Vatican II the Church — and this should apply to the priest — wishes to show "its solidarity with the entire human family to which (it) belongs, as well as its respect and love for them all"; it "offers to mankind its sincere collaboration in fostering that brotherhood of all men which is in keeping with man's vocation."[4]

The consequences of this re-orientation are immense They led to polarisations in many spheres There is first the conflict between the traditional priest who lives and works in a static Christian community, and the modern priest who tries to put into practice the new openness to the surrounding world We surely must beware of simplifications, exaggerations and caricatures Still, there are two conflicting mentalities they express themselves in dress, in relations with people, mostly the youth, they affect reading, study, entertainment and conversation While traditional standards were more or less fixed and priests knew what to do and how to behave, modern priests seem to lack clear orientations with regard to their attitudes

Indian or Western?

There is the more specific issue of the attitude towards Indian traditions. For a long time the controversy centred round liturgy and rubrics, specifically around the famous "twelve points" which were approved by the Indian Hierarchy and confirmed by Rome as early as 1969. But more important issues are at stake The need of inculturation has been felt not so much in legal issues, but in the entire outlook and form of life Though Indian culture is torn between many forces, its deep traditions and values are increasingly recognised A Research Seminar on "The Indian Church in the Struggle for a New Society", held in Bangalore last October, has formulated some of them

4 *Gaudium et Spes*, n 3

which concern also the priest. India's cultural tradition is characterised by an "integral humanism, underlying which is a strong belief in man and his freedom and creative potentialities which can transcend and transform structures" It implies a "holistic approach" "There are no dichotomies between the secular and the sacred, the spirit and the body." This integral humanism is "englobed in an atmosphere of harmony between man and the cosmos. A privileged position is given to experience and intuition in contrast to analysis and rationality ' There is a spirit of tolerance and non-violence not only towards men but also towards nature (ecology)."[5]

All this has, of course, to be spelled out and concreticised. But we must reflect and ask. Has not much of the values of Indian traditions been lost because of the predominantly juridical set up of Church structures and a legalistic exercise of authority ? Have they not been lost in the formation of future priests because it is too exclusively rational, and in spirituality and religious life through a lack of contemplative dimension ? Much of the resentment against the Church is to be assigned not merely to the anti-institutional reactions of modern man but to the awakening of the Indian mind The Church has a foreign look not only in her forms of worship but even more because of the prevailing rational approach and legalistic mentality that pervades her life Men and women who are searching for new forms of life and for new ways of sharing the Christian message with the people of India are being marginalised How shall we in concrete implement the Council orientation "to acknowledge, preserve and promote the spiritual and moral values" found among non-Christians ?[6]

More concrete and tangible is the allegiance of the Church to the West, demonstrated by its continued and, one has the impression, ever stronger financial dependence on foreign aid This dependence marks an association with the privileged nations who hold in their hands most of the keys to material progress, and an isolation from the situation and struggle of the third world The problem is complex, but it can hardly be denied that the priest who lives on Western support and enjoys corresponding privileges is dissociated from the masses of the people who experience the limitations imposed on developing nations. Can a Church who is committed to the service of society keep the stigma of association with the privileged nations, share their living standard and security ?

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5 *The Indian Church in the Struggle for a New Society*, Conclusions of the Interdisciplinary Research Seminar, 19-24 October, 1981, Bangalore, NBCLC, nn 24-26.

6. *Nostra Aetate*, n. 2

Integration or Aloofness?

The problem of solidarity with the Indian society takes on its full dimension when we consider the social and economic situation of the country It is enough to indicate it here on the basis of the conclusions of the Bangalore Seminar mentioned above:

> The most glaring fact that sharpens the crisis in Indian society is the massive, de-humanizing poverty of the vast masses of people . The real cause of poverty is the *unjust structure of society* . (which is) hierarchically stratified . : About 13 million rich, followed by about 80 million comfortably well off, followed by about 297 million struggling to remain above the poverty line, followed by about 300 million below the poverty line [7]

The reasons for this situation lie partly outside India: in the colonial past which disoriented the traditional stable Indian economy based on the village and made it dependent on Western production; in the present neo-colonialist system where rich nations have control over money, trade and industry. The distortions of Indian society are in many ways related to these exterior causes: the totally unequal distribution of wealth and hence of power, the domination of economics and policies by a rich elite, both rural and urban, the persistence of the caste system which still accounts for many economic and social disparities This distorted Indian society is pervaded and sustained by a "cluster of values" which are destructive of true community. Such are·

> Financial profit rather than human needs, aggresive individualism rather than integral humanism, ruthless exploitation of natural resources of the earth for greater profits rather than social responsibility towards the limited natural resources of the earth, rugged competition rather than harmonious cooperation, hierarchic discipline rather than coordinated participation, consumerism rather than asceticism [8]

Added to all this is the new increase in communal tensions.

Protest against these evils has shaken India for many years: violent protests with bloodshed and destruction among tribals and Harijans; the organised struggle of unions, the demonstrations of farmers, etc The media denounce corruption, division and oppression; but the results are poor What is the place of the Church in this situation ? And, more precisely What is the role and responsibility of the priest ?

False Alternatives

This is the anxious question of many a seminarian who prepares himself for the priesthood and who fails to find the image with which

7. *The Indian Church in the Struggle for a New Society*, Conclusions, nn. 11-12.
8. Ibid., n 20

he could identify himself. It is the question of the young priest, disillusioned with a ministry which gives him but marginal influence on society, who feels in his flesh the absence of the Church from the mainstream of life and the actual battle-fields of modern society. Should he throw himself into the struggle and, in solidarity with the masses, become part of a movement which sweeps India and the Third World ? Priests or non-priests, should not all share in the same agonies and in the birthpangs of the new humanity ? Is the priest justified to withdraw into a spiritual oasis with traditional church-goers who live in the past, or, perhaps, with an elite-group with higher spiritual aspirations ? Has he to resign himself to follow the traditional patterns of Church life and to entrench himself in the relative calm and security they afford him ?

On the other hand, the priest must take into account the Council's theology of the laity; and this theology makes his self-questioning even more acute For the Council teaches that

> It is the vocation of the laity to seek the Kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and ordering them according to the mind of God. They live in the world, that is, in the various secular professions and occupations . . There they are called by God to work for the sanctification of the world like a leaven, from within, by exercising their proper function according to the spirit of the Gospel.[9]

Indeed it cannot be stressed enough that the laity has to play the decisive role in the proclamation and implementation of the Gospel in the modern world Pope John Paul II made the point once again when, on 5th October, 1981, he addressed the fifth plenary assembly of the Pontifical Council of the Laity:

> At the heart of the situations and problems on which man's future depends, the laity must . . be the witnesses of a new humanity, create new spaces in which brotherhood may be experienced, nourish their creative imagination on the dynamism of the Gospel, struggle to open to Christ, the Lord of History, the door of man's heart, of the culture of people, of the future of nations and of a new international order. The Church needs lay people who will be heralds of the Gospel, so that it may penetrate the whole tissue of social life .[10]

In this hopeful vision of a committed laity the Pope inserted a remark on the priesthood in which he gives expression to a wish close to his heart. He hoped that with this renewed vision of the laity "there may be left behind that certain distorted view of the priesthood which dims the sense of the pastoral ministry, when the priest succombs to the temptation of becoming a leader on the political, trade-union or social plane".[11]

9. *Lumen Gentium*, n. 31.
10. *Osservatore Romano*, English Edition, 19 October, 1981, p. 4.
11. Ibid.

These are words of serious concern for a genuine understanding of priesthood. Has then the priest to be absent from the actual scene of history where the real issues of modern life are decided, where the Gospel must be proclaimed and the Kingdom of God come about? Has he to limit his activity to the inner life of the Christian community and, where the mission to the world is concerned, abdicate his leadership in the hands of lay-persons, leaving them to fight the battles while — to continue the metaphor — he himself is satisfied with the task of tending those who are wounded in battle ?

To answer such questions we must transcend the current alternatives of evangelisation *or* social involvement, priestly ministry *or* struggle for liberation We must transcend them not by reasoning but by turning to the person of Jesus himself. No one else can answer the questions of the priest because the priest has no other mission than to continue that of Jesus himself in the world of today.

So we turn to Jesus What was his attitude, the basic orientation of his life and ministry ? Surely we shall not expect from the pages of the Gospel a blue-print for the present tasks, what we need to find there is the starting point, the heart of the priestly life and mission which then needs to be articulated in our present world

Gospel Patterns

The first event recorded in Jesus' ministry is his baptism by John It implies Jesus' basic option to associate himself, nay to identify himself with the people in an hour of challenge and awakening The Baptist shook the people from complacency. conditions among the Jews were depressing in the realms of politics, social relations and religion There was only one hope· to turn to God in repentance, to cease from oppression, to live a life of sharing (cf Lk 3: 11-14). Acknowledging their need of conversion and professing their desire to enter into the movement of renewal, people accepted baptism.

Jesus too wished to be baptized. He did not come as a strange Saviour from outside but identified himself with the people, shared their burdens and hopes, and the aspirations of the nation

The Evangelists, however, surround Jesus' baptism with symbols of his unique mission Heaven opens, the Spirit descends upon him, the Father's voice declares him the beloved Son Thus the scene of initiation witnesses to two decisive dimensions of Jesus' mission: He is one of us, "made like his brethren in every respect" (Heb 2: 17); yet

in this solidarity he does not lose his own identity as Son of the Father, guided by the Spirit, whose mission is not confined to earthly dimensions — Heaven is opened

Here is found the pattern of the priestly ministry. The priest must live in genuine solidarity with the people, yet at the same time keep his own identity, the consciousness of his own mission and responsibility He too must have heaven opened to him, be guided by the Spirit and united with God as his ultimate support.

What outlook is required of those who wish to be associated with Jesus? John narrates the encounter with Nicodemus who seemed predestined to be, in a unique way associated with Jesus' message of God's Kingdom As a member of the Sanhedrin he enjoyed a high social and political status, as a Pharisee he followed strict moral principles, being well intentioned he recognised in Jesus' work a divine inspiration Nicodemus embodied the best that the Jewish community could offer to Jesus by way of moral support for his mission But we know Jesus' summons: "Unless one is born anew he cannot see the Kingdom of God" (Jn 3: 3) The injunction was puzzling. Were all the social and ethical endowments of this man valueless in God's Kingdom? They were, unless permeated by something entirely new, by a life-giving inspiration that cannot be articulated in social or political categories but flows from above, a power that can shake the world yet is not measurable "The wind blows where it wills" (3: 8)

For the modern priest who wishes to fulfil Jesus' mission in our society the personal awareness of the Spirit of Jesus, the experience of God's power and freedom, of his love and demands, are indispensable A diploma in social sciences and expertise in the techniques of social change may be important, but in the priestly ministry they are no substitute for the Spirit of Jesus Though God's Kingdom is fully inserted in this world and needs to be realized in human society, it transcends earthly horizons and cannot be spelled out in human language

Further: All the Gospels reflect the radicality of Jesus' demands on his disciples Luke's formula seems the most forceful: "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple" (Lk 14: 26) Jesus' commitment is total, and so are his demands on his disciples. God's Kingdom is the ultimate goal of all creation to which everything is subordinate. This absolutism has nothing to do with any sort of fanaticism that surrenders to an ideology which forces the complexity of life and the world into

an (apparently) coherent system. God's Kingdom is not an ideology, nor is it a system. Jesus quite simply knows nothing but God and man; he has the assurance that man and world, God's creation, have a meaning and a goal which he unfolds in his life, struggle and death, and are *sealed by God* in *his* Resurrection.

This, then, is the demand made on the priest of today: to believe in Jesus Christ, not with a merely notional assent but with a faith that rests on God's word beyond all appearances, enabling the disciple to follow Jesus and to invest his entire life in the realization of God's Kingdom

The Role of the Priest in Building a New Society

Let us come back to our theme What is the priest's role in a human community of crisis and change ? We should see him first, like Jesus himself, on his way to a baptism of repentance, one with the mass of people who search for true life. He is not an outsider who comes to teach them but is one with the people. This implies, first, a sense of solidarity The priest does not live his life in privileged aloofness but with the people. All the faithful must be able to recognize *their* priests, priests, that is, who are concerned with them in love, rejoice and suffer with them. The priest must, further, know his people, not only persons and families, but also their conditions, social status, economic situation. He also must see his local community in the wider context of the country, with its tensions and aspirations Finally, he must be committed to their progress, concerned with their whole life, material and spiritual, as individuals and community.

The Priest as Disciple

For his community he must represent Jesus For the Christian there is only one society God's Kingdom realized in our world. Thus the specific task of the priest, as leader and inspirer of the Christian community, consists in helping them to be truly Christian. In actual practice he has to carry out many tasks but they all converge in his ultimate function to build up Christ's body in the local Church. This is the original understanding of Christian community leaders: The Church is apostolic, i e , founded on the apostles who are witnesses to Jesus. The early insistence on the apostolicity of the local Churches was not primarily prompted by a concern for legal structures but by the need to ensure continuity with the genuine spirit of Jesus. According to E. Schillebeeckx, "those who hold office in the Church know that they are under obligation to the apostolic heritage."

Apostolicity is "the guarantee that they truly remain centres of Jesus"; it "points at the distinguishing mark of the community as discipleship of Jesus."[12] "Ministry is necessary to keep the community on apostolic lines, as the community of Jesus"[13]

Thus it is the priest's responsibility to see to it that the inner life and the exterior involvement of the community is guided by Jesus' spirit Hence he himself must be first of all a disciple He must have a personal understanding of Jesus' mission and of God's Kingdom. In his involvement to build a new society, the spiritual dimension of his life is decisive Too easily we take this for granted. We know, of course, that priests must pray and read the Bible, but it is not enough for them to keep to the general frame of liturgical prayers in office and mass The priestly charism of leadership implies a personal depth and an awareness of Jesus' person. The challenge for the priest is to become the inspiration of his community. He must be for them a witness of God's Kingdom, a disciple of Jesus, a guarantee that they are guided by Jesus' spirit

Inculturation

Let us turn to the priest's attitude to the Indian traditions The liturgy is the celebration of God's love for his people. It is all for their sake. They must feel at home with the atmosphere, the songs, the prayers. The liturgy should naturally reflect the social and artistic models of the country; but nothing should be forced on the people. In presiding over the celebration the priest should not be guided by abstract ideals, either traditional or progressive; his only concern is the congregation which needs the life and love of Jesus Christ.

As leader of the local community, however, the priest has many other concerns. A renewed Indian society must outgrow the evils which spring from India's own traditions. The divisive power of caste has been preserved even in Christian communities and at times plays an important role also in clerical circles. Seclusion and mutual rivalry between linguistic and ethnic groups do great harm to the common mission of the Church. The different rites, meant to be an enrichment of Christian life, threaten to become a source of division Discussions on these issues are of little avail and mostly lead to hardened positions. Should we not ask once more the simple question: What would Jesus do ? Every valid ecclesiology needs to be based on Jesus, who always unites, never divides; who breaks down all man-

12 E. SCHILLEBEECKX, *Ministry: A Case for Change*, SCM Press, 1981, p 13.
13. Ibid, p. 18.

made barriers. The core of Jesus' preaching of God's kingdom is integration, gathering up. A priest who stands for unity may have to share in the experience of Jesus who never identified himself with any group or party, and for this reason stood alone, without support, in his trial. Unless we are able to achieve a degree of unity and mutual acceptance within the Christian fold, and first of all among clergy and religious, we can hardly expect to become an integrating force in a new society.

There are other evils which cannot be eradicated over-night, where patience is needed and sustained effort The priest has a position of authority and can gradually change the mind of people, e g , in the vexed problem of dowry which ruins the happiness of many young couples What we mean to stress is this To build a new society is not a matter of high ideals, which often are beyond reach, or only of legislation; it is a matter of deep convictions and of consistent efforts to lead and form the Christian community in the spirit of Jesus

The Priest's Involvement

We have to face the crucial question how far a priest should be involved in secular affairs A few preliminary reflections are needed to guide us in answering this question

There is, first, no dividing line between the secular and the spiritual sphere There exists only one world, one destiny for man. This world of ours is created by God and redeemed by Jesus Christ; it is to be renewed and united through the Holy Spirit and fulfilled in God's Holy City. We cannot separate work for God's Kingdom from work for a new society

Further, Jesus' mission to proclaim God's Kingdom and to inaugurate it in our world is embodied in the entire community of the Church, though concrete tasks and functions are carried out in accordance with a diversity of charisms Each one need not do everything; yet there are no airtight compartments between services Each charism is integrated into the common mission In what way, then, is the charism of unifying leadership, proper to the priest, related to the task of building a new society ? He surely cannot disregard the secular sphere as lying outside his responsibility If the Church in its entirety has a mission in the temporal order of society, the priest as leader must share this mission and inspire and motivate the community for it This, in fact, will always be his principal task in this regard

But has he also to engage actively in the work for a new society, to build secular society in the social, economic and political fields ? Various factors need to be considered.

The secular involvement of a Christian must spring from his actual position and capacity. In our differentiated society, where each function demands professional knowledge, skills, experience, it would normally be absured if priests presented themselves as expert leaders in the complex problems of our world. Our best sociologists, for instance O. von Nell Breuning, do not tire of warning priests against mixing into matters in which they are not competent or siding in disputes the implications of which they are unable to grasp.

Further it seems obvious that the realm of social affairs and politics belongs to the lay person who through his social and professional status is inserted in the secular structures and therefore bears immediate responsibility for their proper order This is the thrust of the Council doctrine on the laity. It will be for the priest to encourage Christian lay people to be actively involved in the various spheres which influence society· politics, social work, journalism, trade unions, etc It will also be for him to influence movements in order that justice and human values be their norms both in goals and methods

Still, the complexity of actual life cannot be reduced to abstract rules, least of all where leadership is concerned, and the leader's overall responsibility may force him to step in where the normal agencies are inadequate. It may happen, particularly in young Churches, that the laity is not sufficiently educated and trained to take up the cause for justice and human rights Who shall do it ? Surely the priest shall work for the formation of the laity, but this takes time and patience, and there are tasks which cannot be delayed It may also happen that people are not in a position to stand up against oppressive powers; they risk arrests and torture, even death if they raise their voice or join movements for basic rights (The cases of Latin America are well known) Where lay people cannot take their case into their own hands, the leader has to step in, show them what possibilities there are and help them to organise their human and material resources

What will be the form of the priest's involvement ? All depends on circumstances In many cases it will consist in public moral support, though even this will often be blamed as political interference. We think of the Church's support of the powerful popular movement in Poland which is a witness to the Christian faith and an assistence in demands of justice.

This is obviously not the place to enter into casuistics and ask under which conditions the involvement of priests in the secular sphere is justified or even demanded, what forms are appropriate, what dangers implied. The only answer that can be given is to ask the simple counter-

question: What would Jesus have done? We do not expect from research scholars an answer to this question; it is not contained in the letter of the New Testament. Conditions in Jesus' time were so different that we must be very cautious of parallels with our time. But Jesus promised us the Spirit who would teach us all things (cf. Jn 14: 26). The Church as a community and the individual priest must be guided by this Spirit and learn to discern his inspirations This need for discernment leads us back to our biblical reflections: Unless we are born anew, guided by Jesus' Spirit, we will not be able to make the specific contribution which is expected from the Church, and in particular from the priest in our time

The Problem of Formation

It is against this background that the crucial problem of the formation of priests must be seen But it is beyond the scope of this article to spell out its many aspects Only five key-words may be proposed:

The seminarian must be initiated into *personal discipleship of Jesus.* This is the core of the priestly ministry. A personalised spirituality does not consist in a routine of spiritual duties, but in a free option and commitment

He must be *involved* to some degree with people and in situations which demand discernment, decisions, even risks. No true personality can grow in a non-committal atmosphere He must be prepared for leadership and must begin to experience the problems of his ministry even during the years of formation.

He must grow in responsible *self-discipline* and learn to plan his spiritual life, his studies and involvement in a balanced manner. Imposed discipline must gradually give way to freely accepted self-control

Much stress should be laid on *human maturity.* The Council has spelled this out:

> There should be developed in seminarians a due degree of human maturity, attested to chiefly by a certain emotional stability, by an ability to make considered decision, and by a right manner of passing judgment on events and people They should be practiced in an intelligent organization of their proper talents, they should be trained in what strengthens character; and, in general, they should learn to prize those qualities which are highly regarded among men and speak well of a minister of Christ. Such are sincerity of heart, a constant concern for justice, fidelity to one's word, courtesy of manner, restraint, and kindliness in speech.[14]

14. *Optatam Totius,* n 11.

Much open, and more underground criticism against priests, and the Church in general, has to do with the lack of these qualities. They must be embodied in bishops and seminary staff and express themselves in an atmosphere of openness and confidence.

Finally the future priest must grow in *loyalty towards the Church.*[15] This loyalty is not primarily addressed to structures, but to the Christian community which forms part of an evolving world. He will be loyal to the hierarchy but not subservient, open to the problems of the world but not easily swept off his feet. He must find the balance between conformism and revolt This cannot consist in a comfortable compromise but must be a serious effort to follow Jesus Christ and to be guided by his Spirit.

Conclusion

What, then will be the place of the priest in a new society ? His social position may change; the organisation of Christian communities may lead to new forms (grass-root developments point towards new groupings); but the basis of the priestly self-understanding will remain Jesus Christ. Through his ministry of leadership the priest must stand guarantee to the local community that the Spirit of Jesus is with them. This is his unalienable role in the mission of the Church for a new society.

15 *Optatam Totius*, n 9.

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way throw much light on the essentials of religious life. With its systematically appended notes and its Bibliography, the book could serve as a very useful source-material for anyone interested in studying the theology of religious life

Joe Mathias, S.J.

Training Priests for North India

Subhash ANAND

THE Rectors of the major seminaries in the Hindi Region, in their meeting in January 1980, felt the need of a "serious and systematic study" about the formation of priests for North India. The Bishops of the said region, in their meeting in March 1980, fully supported "the desire of their seminary Rectors to make a serious and systematic study of seminary formation in this region in all its aspects" To achieve this purpose they agreed to have a "general consultation of the Staff members of all the Major Seminaries and Religious Scholasticates . .as early as possible". In order to plan this consultation the Rectors of the above-mentioned institutions met again in March 1981 The steering committee of the Bishops of the Hindi Region, in their meeting in August 1981, took the problem of priestly formation as the only major topic for its discussion — thereby indicating that they wish this problem to be given top priority. In the meanwhile a questionnaire has been sent to the "Bishops, Priests, Seminary staff and students of the Hindi region", and a meeting of "experts and resource-persons" has been called in December 1981 The general consultation is due to take place in February 1982. In this article I wish to indicate some of the presuppositions of fresh planning of priestly formation for North India.[1]

The Church in a Pluralistic and Changing World

The formation of priests reflects the concerns of the whole Church, and the Church reflects — to some extent at least — the concerns and the trends of life and thought of the world at large. One of the most striking characteristics of our times is that we are in a changing world. Not that the world has not been changing before, but today the changes are so rapid that we can be swept off our feet. Even in the Church we have had great changes — changes that make not a few rather apprehensive This situation calls for on-going formation Yet how many priests really do serious theological studies after their ordination. The Bishops of the Hindi Region agree "that very few priests were

1 I have been asked to contribute my mite towards this consultation, and the texts within quotes, unless otherwise indicated, are from the typed or cyclostyled reports of the meetings mentioned in the opening paragraph.

interested in an on-going formation. There was an apathy for reading new material which is constantly being circulated." This is partly, if not mostly, explained by the common understanding that a candidate should finish his theological studies before getting ordained. We must ask ourselves to what extent should the "basics" of theology and Scripture be done before ordination. The on-going formation programme must be seen not merely as the source of some possibly helpful formation and information, but as a vital need of the ministry itself

In a changing world many of the traditionally sacred beliefs and practices have been abandoned. In such a situation the candidate must be helped to discern the essential from the non-essential, the real deposit of faith from the mere accretions of history He must be exposed to contemporary trends and learn to view them critically Precisely because we are in a rapidly changing world we need solid personal convictions, deep faith To abandon the essentials would be a suicidal change, a loss of identity, and thereby a source of irrelevance

We are going through a process of secularization and declericalization In the past, the Sacred — including sacred persons — have dominated society Today people resent undue interference of this sort Within the Church too there is — and there should be — a certain amount of declericalization This will raise many questions, e g · should Baptism, Marriage, the Anointing of the sick, Viaticum, and the Funeral Rites normally be taken care of by ordained ministers ? Should we not explore much more — particularly in mission lands where we do not have enough priests — the real possibilities of lay-ministries ? Once this is done, another benefit will follow progressively the cult-dominated or ritual-centred idea of priesthood will give way to a more profound, spiritual and personally pastoral understanding. This is bound to determine not only the formation of future priests, but also their mode of functioning as pastors.

During the Bishops' meeting it was observed that "the intellectual calibre of the seminarians was going down" There are many reasons for this I would like to underline one which I consider of paramount significance for us in India One of the features of an industrial culture is the heavy emphasis on productivity, efficiency, success. Even though we in India are not yet out and out industrialized, we are heavily influenced by this culture, not merely because our major seminaries are situated in towns, but also — so it seems to me — because some of our spiritual guides — who have been under the same influence during their own formation — insist on personal fulfilment, personality development, individuality, etc. I am not saying that these are not

values. I am afraid that, partly as a reaction to the past, we are overstating them[2] Now from my experience, both as a student and as a teacher in a major seminary for some time now, I can say that the study of philosophy and theology by itself does not give a sense of fulfilment to most of our students, who — quite naturally — seek for more immediate results and appreciation. This is one reason why our tradition insists that, before starting on a serious study of philosophy and theology, the student must not only be emotionally mature, but also free from the natural desire for results.[3] Hence a deeper study of theology would require not only getting "good seminary professors with the necessary qualifications and qualities", but also being much more selective in admitting students to our seminaries. We must really believe what the Second Vatican Council says·

> In the entire process of selecting and testing students a due firmness is to be adopted, *even if a deplorable lack of priests should exist*, since God will not allow his Church to want for ministers if those who are worthy are promoted and those not qualified, at an early date, guided in a fatherly way to undertake other tasks[4]

I have reasons to believe that this is not being done as it should be We are too anxious to get priests[5] Consequently, when unprepared students crowd our seminaries — this is not questionning their goodwill — we find that they tend to give undue importance to games, sports, putting up dramas, visiting people, etc And unconsciously we work out a rationale to legitimize this· building up the community, preparing for youth work, promoting cultural fellowship, pastoral ministry, etc Here one may ask Do not young people in the world, studying for B A or M A, put themselves seriously into their study ? Honestly, I am not sure of all the facts, but one thing is clear· even if their studies are not experienced as a source of immediate success and appreciation, they are motivated by other considerations: better jobs, better husbands, etc I am not at all suggesting that we ordain only the "clever" students — then we would never have had a Curé d'Ars !

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2 In a document "Spiritual Formation in Seminaries", the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education says· "The expression 'self-denial' is rarely heard today Self-denial itself is accepted very unwillingly" *L'Osservatore Romano* (Weekly English Edition), April 21, 1980, p 9

3 Cfr G GISPERT-SAUCH, "Shankaracharya and Our Theological Task", VIDYAJYOTI, September 1978, pp 348-355.

4 *Optatam Totius* (Decree on Priestly Formation), n 6, emphasis mine

5 Let me quote the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education in another context "It appears that it is the diocesan authorities who are opposed to this spiritual propaedeutic period *This seems to come from a lack of priests* and it would be foolish to institute such a practice" Cf loc cit, p 10

6 I am not saying that seminarians do not need games, etc, but we should not make the seminary "a game park or an athletic club" Cfr M CARAPIET, "Poverty as an Inculturation Faetor", VIDYAJYOTI, March 1981, p. 121.

I am pleading for greater maturity already at the start of priestly studies.

Another feature of our times is the great emphasis on individual freedom. No longer does the individual want to be told what he should and what he should not do; no longer is he prepared to allow others to determine what is and what is not relevant for him. We find these attitudes among our seminarians too — nothing surprising, as we are the children of our times We can react to this situation in two ways. First, we can, as sometimes I hear priests and bishops do, complain about the decline of discipline in our seminaries The more healthy attitude would be to take a serious note of these attitudes and change our formation programme. If there is a crisis in discipline, it is not because people are bad, but because they are not sufficiently mature for an individual-centred approach to formation, more so in our over-crowded seminaries, where "the personal direction given to seminarians was considered inadequate" Most of our seminarians know their rights but not quite their duties· a typical characteristic of adolescence. Really creative and realistic personal decisions are possible only when a person has not merely a conceptual comprehension of goals, but an emotional and moral preparation, and also an existential communion with the hard facts of life Otherwise we formulate radical theologies, but our lives continue to be mediocre! I have painfully realized that attempts to motivate students who are emotionally not prepared or who are snugly removed from the painful life-situations even of our own families, usually fail Once again I am not passing judgments, but simply sharing my experience It is my contention that when we are at a comfortable distance from life we tend to make unrealistic decisions, we tend to get frustrated easily; but then, as one of my seminarians once remarked to me, even our frustrations are artificial!

Some of my confrères tell me that we must accept people as they are, allow them to learn by making mistakes In principle I agree wholeheartedly with them. But I have a few questions to ask In real life, to what extent are people accepted as they are, and to what extent are they forced to change by the knocks they get? What are the dynamics of learning by making mistakes? To what extent are these obtained in our seminaries? I have reasons to feel uncomfortable! Let me explain. There are three possible situations when a person learns by his mistakes. First, due to his mistake others suffer and they tell him so. Today we are very tolerant theologically and otherwise. Second, the individual pays for his mistake, and this

brings him to his senses To what extent do we — by we I mean not only seminarians — pay for our mistakes? Are there not in the Church today projects of doubtful value, just because some generous soul is prepared to foot the bill? Third, the individual realizes his mistake and the pain it gives to others and the harm it does to himself — but this requires greater maturity Hence, a serious effort to revamp the formation of priests, and prepare them for a changing and pluralistic world would mean that mere high-school-passed or even intermediate-passed students will not be the right material, more so when these studies are done in a minor seminary, away from real life

The Church as the Saving Presence of Jesus Christ

The formation of future priests presupposes that both, the staff and the students, are fully conscious as to what the priest should be and should be doing Here again there are reasons to think that there is no agreement on the fundamental issue We must distinguish two aspects of this question: What is the mission of the Church as a whole? Does the priest, as different from the lay person, have a specific function in the Church? One may concede that in special cases the priest may take upon himself the function of the lay person, but he must be very conscious of this undesired anomaly and hand over the responsibility to the laity as soon as it is ready

As I already stated earlier, the industrial culture tends to make us more action-dominated Churchwomen and churchmen are not immune to this unhealthy but all-pervading trend Our Bishops would like us to remember that "our focal point is on *Being*" So too, the Church is not primarily a place, a compound, an institution, but a community of persons who are "helping each other in their struggle to be full persons in Christ" If being is our emphasis, then, whatever be the work a priest does, his first and most fundamental concern is *to be* a man of God This does not seem to be quite clear not only to our seminarians, but also to many of our pastors. I have had to deal with quite a few seminarians who are very eager to study journalism, social-work, youth-psychology, and what not, and yet who are not that eager about their prayer. Here again it is not bad will but the simple fact that only a deep person can find prayer fulfilling; but one cannot become deep without prayer. Hence the novice must begin in faith and be sustained in faith On the other hand, even without depth and faith one can find social work, youth-work, journalism, etc, quite rewarding Once again we see the need of greater maturity at the very start If a seminarian "completes" his study without acquiring a deep love for prayer then most likely he will not acquire

it during his ministry. When I say that for a priest — even for the most busy parish-priest or for the ever-on-the-move missionary — the first and most fundamental concern is prayer, I am not advocating a spirituality of withdrawal Far from it ! I do believe that we can and should be contemplatives in action, and thus combine deep interiority with intense involvement in the lives of our people We have a wonderful example of this in the person of Gandhiji whom people called *mahātmā* and not *netā* or *lokanāyaka*, for they saw in him not merely a political leader or a demagogue, but a truly contemplative and deeply spiritual person

If we are to formulate a formation programme, "keeping in mind the specific needs of a non-Christian milieu", then this emphasis on the spiritual mission of the priest is all the more important Traditional Christians may — I say may — accept a priest even if he does not evince a serious concern for values spiritual, but just because he is a priest To the new Christians, who are mostly tribals or members of the scheduled castes, the priest appears as a rich, and not rarely as an influential, benefactor For the others, he is at the most a good educator, social-worker, etc , very often seen as competing with other educators or social workers ! Only when a priest appears as a "Christian Guru who has experienced God in a deeper way", only when he "values recollectedness, appreciates silence", will he have relevance "in the midst of the teeming millions of our fellowmen who value and thirst for an experience of God"

The Hindu tradition expects — and rightly so — that a man of God be a man of simplicity and austerity Conversely when they find an austere and simple man they are more inclined to accept him as a spiritual guide. In North India one aspect of this simplicity is that a priest "leads a frugal life and also abstains from drinks and smoking". Smoking and drinking are not bad, but our people expect their spiritual leaders to be men of greater self-denial; they expect them to avoid superfluities From my experience with young seminarians, I can say that their immaturity is one of the possible reasons why they may fall for such costly and yet useless habits: either they need to prove that they are grown up, or they do not have the courage to say no to their elder companions who have taken it upon themselves to "liberate" their younger brothers

A Church of Basic Communities

Today we are more and more conscious of the need of authentic communities. The concept of basic communities is being studied by more and more people and we are realizing their potential for the

Church and her mission The Church was meant by Jesus to be a a community of believers united in love. As such she has an urgent mission in India, a nation "torn by class and caste conflicts". And yet the tragedy is that the "class conflicts, communal solidarities and politics" that characterize our country are also found in the Church, and as a consequence, "our society is not yet sufficiently aware of the Church" This malaise of caste-consciousness is affecting not merely uneducated lay persons, but also priests, and if the information given to me is correct, even some of our Bishops I have been given to understand that in the recent conflict among Christians of different language-groups in one of our major cities, the leaders were from among the clergy. This means that our existing seminaries have not succeeded in eradicating this deep-rooted cancer from the hearts of our students I know one seminary where the students are almost exclusively from one state, and yet they feel torn apart by caste distinctions In another seminary whose staff and students think that their seminary has a very cordial atmosphere, clannish mentality becomes evident the way the inmates group themselves when they come for meal

The alternative to the present seminaries is to have smaller but more meaningful communities Some of the existing seminaries are trying out group-living of different sorts I am inclined to say that this situation, while being the most that can be done in the present set-up, is far from being satisfactory Hence we should make a more radical break from the present system One possibility would be to have a building in a central locality, some sort of information centre or dialogue centre This could have a fairly good library, and two or three rooms for meetings, prayer-service, etc. The students could live in different parts of the town or village as the case may be Everyday they cycle to the centre for classes[7] In this way they will be involved in a meaningful community while still in formation. This will also enable them to give expression to "the role of the Church in the neighbourhood" which is "considered to be of significant value". In a bigger seminary, individuals who for some reason or the other are not inclined to work in a team are soon left out by their companions, and sometimes even by the staff who like to go for help to the more willing horses. Somehow these students get ordained. But

7 Here I may be allowed to share with you the experience of one seminary professor who for a year shared two small rooms with four theology students The five of them cycled everyday to their seminary They did all the marketing and cooking The students did not feel that their studies had received a set-back The seminary professor continued with his usual load of teaching and research, in no way less than his colleagues.

in the Bishops' meeting "it was commonly felt that Bishops face the greatest problem from priests who are unable to live with others or work in a team". *If "the priest by definition is a community builder", then this must be a very vital part of his formation* This new pattern will mean not only smaller and therefore more meaningful communities, but also communities that are much more close to life. This in turn will affect the prayer-life of the members, and their liturgy will become very meaningful even without many innovations

The Church of the Poor

In their discussion, the Bishops of the Hindi Region "felt that the Church is the Church of the poor". We can no longer be merely *for* the poor. Today we have to be the Church *of* the poor. But the question that has been bothering me for many years is whether we really mean what we say. Can a Church, that is really the Church of the poor, that too in a country like India, where millions are below the poverty line, really afford the type of seminaries we now have ? Are not these a monumental evidence that we are the Church of the affluent. Are we not members of some sort of Rotary Club or Lions Club who live comfortably but still organize some sort of relief for the poor ? Is not the ease with which we put up buildings, buy new equipment, plan out study-tours, organize all sorts of seminars, going against all that we proclaim ? Are we not telling the poor by our lives that we have a bottomless pool of funds ?[8] Are not our concepts of scholarship and research, standards and efficiency, culture and leisure, etc., taken over from affluent countries ?[9] If a priest is expected to be "a man of pastoral compassion", then he must share in the hardships of his people, he must live close to them, and yet joining the clerical circle seems to have the opposite effect[10] Hence it should not surprise anybody if "seminarians who are used to large structures, comfortable rooms, sufficient money to meet their expenses", find it "difficult to adjust themselves to working in rural areas" As I have said much about this need for us to be really the Church of the poor elsewhere, I shall not expatiate upon it further.[11] Two points, however, need to be stated.

8. Cf. the rather biting article of Fr Fidelis, O F.M , "The Bottomless Pool", *The Examiner*, September 17, 1977, p. 551.

9 Carapiet, himself a professor of Morning Star College, Calcutta, calculates that if a seminary wishes to maintain a "standard" then it would need to spend Rs 30,000/- a year on reviews alone Cf art cit., p 122.

10. Cf. S. Rayan, "Flesh of India's Flesh", *Jeevadhara*, June-July 1976, pp. 259-267.

11. Cf. "Evangelical Poverty and Our Mission in India Today", Vidyajyoti, November 1976, pp. 461-465; "Some Missiological Implications of the Concept of Incarnation", ibid., January 1978, pp. 35-41, "A Prolegomenon to Theologizing in India Today", ibid., February 1979, pp. 50-58, "Church-Unity and Social Justice", ibid , December 1980, pp 506-517

First, many of us have known young men and women, who, though coming from families better off than ours, have combined part-time work with their college studies. It is time that we give up the myth that the study of philosophy and theology cannot be combined with some earning work. Only when our seminarians begin to earn and learn will we be able to say that we are the Church of the poor. This earn-and-learn approach will bring greater sobriety to our lives, greater reality Our prayer-life too will be deepened, and we will be more mature

Second — and this is a delicate matter, but it needs to be said all the same because it is very important. When I talk to seminarians about being poor they tend to agree with me by and large. But it is quite a different matter when it comes to practice They will eloquently defend cultural programmes, films, TV, etc., as means of coming closer to our people, of getting involved in their lives, and yet these same seminarians are rather lethargic when it comes the manual work They do not seem to realize that through manual work they are coming closer to and getting actively involved in the lives of millions of our people who in spite of long hours of hard manual work everyday do not have enough to live by. Why is this ? Once again not because of bad will, but because of what I call motivational gap. When they agree with me about the need of being poor it is a cerebral agreement. But their hearts are moved not by what I say but what they saw when they joined the minor seminary, and what they continue to see What is it ? The Lord Bishop with a nice car driven by a brightly uniformed driver, the Vicar General (or Very Reverend Monsignor) with a scooter, their parish-priest who has a comfortable suite of rooms, with a well-stocked larder and a good wardrobe ! It is this image which, though mostly buried in the sub-conscious, is really motivating most of us Hence if our Bishops wish that their seminarians be trained to work for the Church of the poor, the seminarians must see their Bishops, VGs, parish-priests and seminary professors as really representing this Church, and not merely preaching about it, or theologising about it Without this example, all that is done by way of motivation, though well received, remains ineffective.

The Local Church

The formation of priests must help in the formation of the local Church. The Seminary Rectors, in their first consultation in 1980, felt that a "number of priests are not well versed in the language and culture of the Hindi Region". This is not a very happy state of affairs, and without wanting to be judgmental, I think that priests who do not

know the language of the region where they work, have understood neither mission theology nor missionary spirituality. Here again it is not their fault, at least not totally. The fact that they have been ordained is an implicit way of saying that Hindi is after all not that essential to work in the Hindi Region ! It becomes imperative that we start teaching theology in Hindi in our Hindi Region Hence if there are some seminary professors who do not know enough Hindi, and if they are below fifty years in age, then the Hindi Region Bishops should organize an obligatory course for them during the coming summer vacations If there are any Bishops of this region who do not know enough Hindi then they too should attend this course. The suggestion that theology be taught in Hindi is not meant to minimize the value of English But sometimes I do come across priests and seminarians who can speak neither Hindi nor English well !

The local Church is possible only if we learn to take decisions at the local level To me it looks ludicrously tragic that we need to look up to Rome, for instance, regarding the details of the Eucharistic celebration I am not questioning the authority of Rome But precisely because of what it is, Rome should interfere only when it is really a matter of faith and morals Other things, like rubrics, *ratio studiorum* for our seminaries, etc , are within the competence of the local Church Our Bishops, I hope, will take the decisions they should, and if need be, reverently and firmly, assert their authority If decisions are to be taken at the local level, people will have to be trained for it Decisions in the Church are not the result merely of consultation and discussion — of which we have a lot in the Church today Decisions in the Church are an attempt to formulate what we think is God's will for his people today, here, in this context Hence we can make such decisions only if we are struggling to be sensitive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit Therefore the art of spiritual discernment is an essential part of the formation of a future priest [12] This process of coming to a decision at the local level means that we also give the laity their rightful place, and that not grudgingly but joyfully. I would even suggest that they have a real say in the selection and eventual promotion of candidates to the priesthood.

The Bishops of the Hindi Region desire that all religious working in their dioceses "come together and work as co-workers striving for a common goal"; and yet their experience makes them complain: "Each

12. In some seminaries there is, what is known as, a students' council. This could be one of the forums that could serve as a good tool for helping the students grow in the art of discernment. Without this perspective, such a council tends to become, if I be allowed the expression, a trade union.

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religious Congregation, whether of men or women, was trying to achieve its own goals, unmindful of the needs of the local Church." I think one way to overcome this tendency would be to collaborate already at the formation stage The religious need not have their own scholasticates with a full-fledged staff As I suggested earlier, there could be an academic set-up in a central locality with small communities scattered all over the town or village Of course in this arrangement our students will not have the advantage they now have of having their classes and their living quarters in the same building, or at least on the same campus But then how many of their compeers have this luxury ? How many of our college-going men and women live in hostels close to their college or even on the same campus ? The very fact that a student cycles up and down through the town daily will add to his awareness of the problems of his people If the diocesans and the religious collaborate already at this stage then a fellowship will be fostered among the students and later on, when they are in the field, they will work together as a team We can even divide the theology programme in such a way that one half could be done in one town and the other in another This will not only prevent the formation of bigger institutions, but also make the theological presence more felt Further if we accept that not all the basic theology needs to be done before ordination, then one half could be so planned that even congregations of brothers and women religious can attend it Thus these congregations will not need to arrange separate courses and be a drain on the seminary staff as is happening now, even though seminary professors seem to like giving courses to sisters ! Young sisters and seminarians doing theology together will help each other in many other ways besides

In a Church that is truly local the ordinary needs are taken care of by local funds The formation of future priests is an ordinary need of the Church Hence if our Bishops really wish their dioceses to become the local Church then they must accept as a principle that the formation of future priests will no more depend on foreign funds but on native resources. I, for one, am convinced that this is possible, provided we accept the earn-and-learn formula It will also help us to present ourselves as the Church of the poor in India and no longer as a colony of the affluent in the West It will also enable us — at least with regard to our seminaries — to take the decisions we need to take We shall pay the piper and we shall call the tune

Not depending on foreign funds will enable us to take our commitment to inculturation more seriously; for then we will have an

"inculturation that is lived and not merely celebrated, as in the liturgy".[13] Yes, not merely celebrated — we Churchwomen and churchmen are good at "celebrations" even when they are modest, once again because someone else foots the bill! When funds are easily available, there can be — and there has been in fact — not only irresponsible planning, but also a lot of alienation The beneficiaries almost unconsciously ape the ways of their benefactors, "the new international statesmen of the decade".[14] Consequently, as long as our seminaries continue to depend on foreign funds, "the inculturation and contextualization suggested in the seminary formation" will continue "to be similar to putting new wine into old skins".

Some of my friends tell me that in the New Testament we do find one Christian community sending help to another I do not know whether this was to meet merely an ordinary need or an extraordinary one. Even if it were the former, it still remains true that the great missionary, Paul, maintained himself with his labour, and therefore could present himself as an example to be imitated (2 Thes 3 7-8). Paul did not think that earning his livelihood would obstruct his prayer, theology, pastoral ministry or missionary work. Yes, we do need communion among the Christian Churches the world over. But instead of sending monetary help to the poorer nations, the richer Churches will do a greater service not only to the whole Church but also to the world at large if they bring pressure on their governments to adopt a more sane and humane economic policy, both at the national and at the international level Some theologians tell me that since the affluent nations became rich precisely by exploiting the poor nations it is but proper that they make reparation by generous donations to the poorer nations Even if we accept such reasoning, I do not see how our seminaries and other institutions whose standard of life "is that of the 15% of the rich in India",[15] can benefit from these donations when right outside our compounds people are living in slums

Conclusion

I have already indicated above the need for priests and bishops to be an example for our seminarians If our lives are really guided by the Gospel values then one more blessing will follow: we will get more numerous and more mature candidates for our seminaries. We

13 CARAPIET, art cit, p 120

14. R. W. TAYLOR, "Christian Ashrams as Style of Mission in India", *International Review of Mission*, July 1979, p 289

15. Bede GRIFFITHS, "The Benedictines in India", *The Examiner*, March 22, 1980, p. 179.

will no longer need to catch them young as we do now If our lives are an inspiration then even men who have done their college will come and offer their lives in the service of the Gospel Thus, once again I wish to repeat, any effort to improve our seminary formation presupposes a serious effort to improve the lives of our priests and bishops Once this happens we will get grown ups joining our seminaries — and the new formation programme needs grown ups.

The Truth Will Make You Free. By Swami SHILANANDA, S J *Anand, Gujarat Sahitya Prakash,* 1980 Pp 390 Rs 18

Swami Shilananda, a Jesuit of the Bombay Province, is living in Nasik as a Christian sannyasi since 1966 In this way he has acquired an exceptional experience thanks to daily contacts with people of various faiths, mostly Hindus While following a path very much inspired by the age-long sannyasa tradition, he never hides his Christian and priestly identity He is a convinced and outspoken apostle of the "Christ on the Indian Road"

This explains the origin and composition of his book, it is built on the theme "Seeking after Truth", which was so dear to Gandhiji's heart He has written it as an advance course destined to educated people who have come in close contact with the Christian faith

It is divided into 25 chapters Each chapter concludes with a prayer and a list of questions The book has also well-chosen illustrations related to the main topics

The author follows an approach which, theologically speaking, is quite classical, perhaps even somehow conservative However, he takes into account the modern attitudes to religion (e g , atheism), science, social realities, psychological insights Hosts of quotations from well-known writers, including many from the Hindu tradition, are found throughout the book

I am not too happy with the historical chapter which covers "the span of twenty centuries" Some examples will suffice Monophysitism strictly understood is not to be identified with Eutyches (p 183) There was no great schism, in fact no schism at all, between Rome and Constantinople in 869 (p 184) Orthodox (not "so-called", please !) Christians are mostly found in the Balkans and in Russia (p. 184), but they also exist in the Near East, in W Europe, in N and S Americas and in Australia As for the origins of Protestantism (pp 184-185), I gather the impression that the author regards the 'reformers' as the chief, if not the only culprits He could at least have mentioned that the Catholic Church in the West was then badly in need of a reform The choice of Agnes of Rome as a typical example of a Christian martyr is unlucky, for "nothing certain can be deduced as to the date or manner of her death" (*Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, London, 1958, p. 25) As for R de Nobili, it is said that his "vision and efforts were not followed up with the seriousness they deserved" (p 193) This statement is misleading Actually they were accepted and continued in the Madurai, Carnatic and Mayssur missions until the beginning of the 19th century Finally, I do not like at all the four lines (p 198) which conclude the section on modern ecumenism entitled "New Times, New Hopes" Judas, the traitor par excellence, is brought in, and all schisms and heresies attributed to Christian imitators of his I would suggest that the entire historical section be revised to conform better to real facts and to show a genuine appreciation of the movement towards Christian unity

E R HAMBYE, S J

Correspondence

On "Catholic Marriage Tribunal Procedure"

Dear Editor,

Theological Publications in India is very grateful to Fr Jos De Cuyper, S J, for reviewing the above book (VIDYAJYOTI, August 1981, p 353) and also, as is normal, for indicating deficiencies in printing TPI always welcomes suggestions for improvement

But, unhappily, he has taken the occasion to make unfair and uncalled-for criticism of the editorial work done by TPI (see para 3 of the review) This, we are afraid, can create misunderstandings and doubts in the minds of the readers, regarding the work of our editorial staff and also the utility of the book itself

It is possible that, in a book of over 400 pages, a few printing mistakes may have escaped the vigilant eyes of the proof-readers But the words, "The proof-reading is *unhappily very defective*", can give the impression that each and every page is abounding in printing mistakes This, to say the least, is very far from the truth The reviewer, unhappily, did not think of corroborating his sweeping statement by mentioning the number of mistakes he has noticed on each and every page

I am not sure it is the task of a book-reviewer to seek out the original manuscript and to compare it with the printed text Anyway we do not complain But what looks strange is his "painful" discovery ("painfully aware") that TPI has "frequently" attempted "to alter and misrepresent the mind of the author" He has further accused TPI of doing "injustice to the work and person of the author"

This is a very serious charge and one could or should believe it, if the author, Fr Taylor, had said so But, strange to say, the author, who has seen the book and with whom we have regular correspondence, has not said a word about our "altering" or "misrepresenting" his mind

Besides, while sending the manuscript to us, the author, considering the special nature of the manuscript, had given us full permission to edit it so as to bring it out as a good book In doing the difficult and laborious task of editing it, a few inaccuracies might have crept in, which, if pointed out, could be corrected in the next edition

But, one is at a loss to understand why a reviewer should accuse TPI of doing "injustice to the work and person of the author", when the author himself, who should know his mind better and who has seen the book, has not thought it worthwhile to make any such complaint to us

A few months ago, when Fr Jos De Cuyper told us, through private correspondence, of the "injustice" done by us to the author and of our "mis-representing" of his mind, we immediately brought these charges to the attention of Fr Taylor himself In his reply (12th July '81) he did not make any remarks or complaints about TPI's editing of his manuscript He only wrote "You both are such busy men and you need all your energies for other things"

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Fr J THEKKEL,
Secretary,
Theological Publications in India

Book Reviews

Sacred Scripture

Son of Man. The Interpretation and Influence of Daniel 7 By Maurice CASEY *London, SPCK, 1979* Pp xvi-272 £ 12 50

Because of a widespread theory that the term Son of Man ultimately derives from Dan 7, 13 Dr Casey has collected and analysed evidence of ancient interpretations of Dan 7 (taken as a whole). There general questions had to be answered for this research "How was Dan 7 interpreted in the ancient world, especially in the time of Jesus and the Gospel writers ? How much was it used in the very earliest period of Christianity ? Thirdly and most important of the three, what was the connection between its interpretation and use of the Son of man problem, both in Judaism and Christianity ?" (p 1)

The author begins by giving a detailed analysis of Dan 7 This has brought him to the conclusion that the chapter is the work of a single author, "a thoroughly Jewish chapter in a thoroughly Jewish book It contains no 'Son of man' concept, and its man-like figure does not suffer" (p 48) The fact that the man-like figure (v. 13) comes with the clouds of heaven does not by itself suggest a divine origin The symbol contrasting with the beasts emerging from the sea, points to Israel, "the Saints" of v 25

Examining how various traditions interpret Dan 7, Casey begins with the Syrian Tradition (ch 3), arguing that it is there that we can find most evidence of the author's original interpretation which was known also at the time of Jesus This tradition knows practically only the corporate interpretation of the man-like figure of Dan 7 This fact is evident even in the case of Ephraem and others who, while seeing in the man-like figure a symbol of the Jews defeating the Seleucids and the surrounding kingdoms, yet note that "its consummation was perfected in Our Lord" (p 64)

Identifying the fourth kingdom as Rome at a time when the whole Mediterranean world was dominated by Rome, the Western tradition (ch 4) has altered the original author's interpretation by "actualising exegesis". Rabbinical and patristic exegesis saw in the four beasts a symbol of "the course of world history down to its end at the time of the little horn, and judgment follows with the triumph of the saints" (p 71) The Christian Latin interpretation individualizes the Son of man and sees in the man-like figure an eschatological prophecy of Christ The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha (ch 5) show that the Jews had no Son of man concept and that their use of Dan 7 did not turn the Aramaic expression into a title This fact forces us to seek the origin of the Gospel term in developments for which Jesus or his followers were responsible We must note further that a title so common in the Gospel is strangely not found in the Epistles (ch 6) and all early confessional material, not even in the Book of Revelation (ch 7), though this work contains quite a number of allusions to or reminiscences of Dan 7, but not the Gospel expression True, there are two instances where we find the expression "like a son of man", but these are best explained as "a combination of semitisms The two occurrences are connected with each other only at the linguistic level, and are not dependent on Dan 7, 13" (p 150)

Concluding the chapter on the Gospels and Acts (ch 8), Casey states that "the influence of Dan 7 can account for the presence of the term 'the Son of man' in only a small group of Son of man sayings The final chapter of this book is therefore devoted to a brief exposition of a more complete theory of the origin of the Gospel term 'Son of man' and its use by the historical Jesus" (p 219) Here Casey accepts the view of Vermes according to whom the Aramaic expression *bar nas* was used both as a general term for 'man', and as a surrogate for the personal pronoun 'I' in particular circumstances, v g , when a speaker would apply to himself some general saying. This

contention has been strongly opposed by scholars. Casey accepts Vermes' position but with some adjustments Broadly speaking, Casey proposes that in the Gospels the expression Son of man goes back to Jesus during his earthly life, while the 'inauthentic' use of the expression in the sense of a Messianic title is due to the interpretation of the Church seeking scriptural background for a developing Christology, more particularly connected with the second coming The Aramaic expression has its *Sitz im Leben* in the life of Jesus, while its Greek translation, as a title, has its *Sitz im Leben* in the work of the early Church, as development of New Testament Christology, "linking together the Jesus of history in the Aramaic-speaking Jewish world with the Christ of faith as he was eventually perceived among the Greeks" (p 239)

The book is an important contribution to the Son of man problem though it will, no doubt, elicit a fair amount of questions, even opposition The text reads easily but requires a working knowledge of Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek J VOLCKAERT, S J

Poverty and Expectation in the Gospels. By David L MEALAND *London, SPCK,* 1981 Pp viii-136 £ 3 95

This study on the Gospels' attitude towards wealth and poverty opens with a brief consideration of the economic background to the Gospels, more particularly the situation occurring in Syria and Palestine in the period of A D 30-90 Against this background, then, the teaching of the gospels on poverty and wealth is examined The author assumes that the Gospels and their sources reflect various strata of economic conditions and probably of place as well Proceeding backwards, he distinguishes four periods the relative security after the Jewish war, the situation during the Jewish revolt, the famine of the year 48, and the precarious economic circumstances of early Christian communities in and around Judea, leading us back to the ministry of Jesus in Galilee and other parts of Palestine

Applying this principle of correlation between the economic circumstances and the various strata of teaching in the gospels Mealand concludes that "in general it is to the sources rather than to the evangelists that we should attribute the severity towards wealth which is found in the gospels It is not possible to assign the documents to particular localities with any confidence, and even attempts to date them can only be approximations We would, however, be correct to regard the sources as closer to Palestinian Christianity before the Jewish revolt. The evangelists Matthew and Luke were probably writing elsewhere and after that period The greater severity attributable to the sources correlates with the harsher economic circumstances of Christianity prior to the Jewish revolt" (p 36f)

Chapter three on "Hostility to Wealth in the Oral Tradition" examines "how much of teaching in the sources about property and riches actually derives from Jesus himself, and how much is due to tradition" (p 38) This is not an easy task The criteria are far from complete or decisive in every instance Passages exposing a "theology of reversal" reveal a *Sitz im Leben* of early Christianity suffering poverty, hunger, derision, while others feast and are prosperous Such are the woes and the story of Dives and Lazarus and their specific expectation of a reversal of fortunes hereafter in which the rich suffer and the poor are compensated Passages which condemn hoarding, and praise generosity fit the situation of the early Church better than the time of Christ himself

The next chapter, "Poverty and the Kingdom of God Jesus and his Disciples", attempts to establish more directly what was the teaching of Jesus on the subject Here are examined the Beatitudes, the mission charge, the calling of disciples and their way of life. The chapter concludes with the remark that Jesus expected a sudden and dramatic future intervention of God, but that he also believed that the present was already a time of decision, of joy, of healing and of a new beginning Why then to expect an end to poverty and to adopt the role of destitute itinerants ? The attitude of Jesus and his followers was a witnessing to the coming Kingdom in trust and dependence on God.

In the concluding chapter Mealand begins by remarking that "the gulf between the strata of Palestinian society in the first century of our era was by no means exclusively an economic one" (p 88), there was also a diversity of race, descent and religious status to be taken into account Yet, many of the sayings in the gospels must be seen against the background of the social and economic events of the tradition, and finally the teaching and activity of Jesus which are inspired and guided by a passionate concern for the dawning Reign of God Early Christianity reflects in its teaching on possessions the economically precarious circumstances

of its origins in Jerusalem, and the severe hardships of the famine The evangelists Matthew and Luke in their redaction reflect the more settled period of a time subsequent to the Jewish revolt as well as geographical and temporal distance from the earlier trouble Mealand sees in the history of the earliest tradition a twofold influence from the environment "the motif of resentment linked to a theology of reversal The danger is that such adaptation replaces the openness of Jesus with an exclusivist outlook governed by resentment. The opposite tendency appears when accommodation is made to the existing order of things, characterized by settled communities with an ever greater 'sufficiency' of possessions In Matthew that tendency is becoming apparent" (p 93)

The chapter closes with a "Contemporary Postscript Social Ethics and the Gospels" (pp 93-98) How has the evidence of the New Testament been used, and how might it be used in connection with the contemporary gulf existing between rich and poor, and the attempt to remedy a desperate disorder? In this connection Mealand reviews some pronouncements by modern Christians, particularly their handling of the New Testament Miranda, Gutierrez, some pronouncements of the WCC (Uppsala, Nairobi)

The author's final conclusion (pp 97f) is that the New Testament is more obviously concerned with belief and with the ethics of life in small communities than with broader political issues The gospels do not elaborate a social ethic and even if they had it would have reflected the social circumstances of the first century and they would have been only indirectly applicable to the complex modern industrial world However, a concern with social ethics is not wholly absent from, or alien to, the gospels Jesus and his disciples saw the sufferings of the poor as part of the evil of the present order which was in need of being transformed They did not lead any political revolt but they did sharply criticize accumulation of wealth and neglect of the poor "It may not be a simple matter to found a social and political theory directly on the gospels, but the New Testament gives no comfort to those who think that religion or morality can turn a blind eye to oppression, injustice, or flagrant inequalities The teaching of Jesus and of the gospels is rather to call people to participate now in a new order in which love both includes and exceeds the demands of justice" (p. 98).

Four brief appendices complete the work: 1 a list of studies on property and riches in the New Testament (pp 99f), 2. an examination on the meaning of *cāni* and *cānāw* (pp 101f), 3. a list of studies of the Lucan attitude to wealth (pp 103f), 4 a survey of passages in the gospels implying the continued possession of property (pp. 106f)

The author analyzes his texts according to a strict critical method, in the context of the economic and social background of the times, this approach sharply contrasts with contemporary writings on the topic, blurred by much ill-informed appeal to Scripture The author's conclusions are sound, cautious and balanced At the same time, however, we notice how little really we know about the economic situation of the time. Neither can we overlook that there is a danger of falling into a vicious circle when arguing from the text about the conditions of a Church, or dating and locating a source from an economic situation

The detailed critical analysis of texts offers no easy reading to the general reader, nevertheless there are many points which will interest him, most of all, perhaps, the clearly stated conclusions

J. VOLCKAERT, S.J

Pneumatology

Theology and Economy of the Holy Spirit. An Eastern Approach. By Petro B T BILANIUK. *Bangalore, Dharmaram Publications*, 1980. Pp xi-218 Rs 25

One of the important differences between Eastern and Western Christianity is, doubtless, the theological and liturgical approach to the Holy Spirit. On the one hand, Eastern Christianity has always cherished the pre-eminent role played in the Church by the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, on the other hand, in the Western tradition until recently, but not without outstanding exceptions, the Holy Spirit has been somewhat neglected

Dr Bilaniuk is an Ukrainian Catholic lay theologian of the great Byzantine tradition who teaches theology in Canada The book contains the ten lectures founded in honour of Fr Placid J Podipara C M.I, given in Rome in 1979. Edited now with a wealth of footnotes and a bibliography, they cover a vast, if somewhat difficult field. But the lecturer seems to be at ease both in the doctrinal and historical domains.

Out of his alert pen there comes out an enriching book He succeeds in presenting the marvels of God's revelation in Scripture and to pursue them in the tradition of the Church

In his exposition of the Scriptural data Dr Bilaniuk uses the most recent critical tools Similarly, while taking stock of the patristic developments, he does not forget their necessary limitations Most of the lectures throw fresh light on the role played by the Holy Spirit

Through Dr Bilaniuk's painstaking research, we are initiated to somewhat unchartered fields, such as the relation between the Spirit and Christian Art, the representative role of ecumenical Councils in the Christian community, Mary characterized not only as *theotokos* but also as pneumatophora (Spirit-Carrier). He also unravels the personal relationship of the Christian to the Spirit, which leads him to final glory Then comes what the author calls the second Pentecost, when the transforming energy of the Spirit will transform humankind and the whole creation into a new world. "Thus the Holy Spirit draws the whole of the extra-divine reality into participation with the inner Triadic life and love This will be the fulfilment of Christ's prayer in John 17, 22 'that they may be one even as we are one' " (p 213)

As is usual in the Eastern tradition, both theology and spirituality join hands in Dr Bilaniuk's reflections One is able to realize how deeply inspiring is the Christian vision of the Holy Spirit This does not mean that the book is easy reading But it not only leads us to a deeper prayer and contemplation, but has also considerable ecumenical value And this is not its least merit

E R HAMBYE, S J

Christian Marriage

Theology of Christian Marriage. By Walter KASPER *London, Burns and Oates*, 1980 Pp vi-102

The English translation of this book came out at the beginning of 1980, the year of the Synod of Bishops on the Family in the Modern World Kasper, a brilliant dogmatic theologian, deals with the theology of marriage against the background of contemporary problems of marriage and family. His approach is refreshingly new but the treatment concise

In chapter one Kasper anthropologically evaluates the changed understanding of marriage as an opportunity and crisis. He draws attention to the human values of personal, fruitful and faithful love which must be taken up into a theology of marriage Chapters two and three are significant from the point of view of dogma The author traces the deep unity in the biblical view of marriage between the book of Genesis and the teaching of Jesus on marriage in the divorce texts Kasper explains that marriage "is the grammar that God uses to express his love and faithfulness" (p 27) He stresses rightly the sacredness and, in a broad sense, the sacramentality of all (traditionally called 'natural') marriages, while at the same time explaining the specific sacramentality of Christian marriage in relation to the saving work of Christ and to the Church He also points out that marriage as a covenant has richer biblical connotations than the traditional concepts of "contract" or "institution" He argues that marriage, like consecrated celibacy itself, is to be considered an eschatological sign sharing in the eschatological sign of the Church

Discussing the theology of unity and indissolubility of marriage, Kasper points out its personalist depths rooted in the covenant love of Christ for the Church In the context of the proclamation of the Kingdom, the words of Jesus against divorce are "a prophetic, messianic and effective affirmation" of the indissolubility of married love Against this background, Kasper discusses the growing pastoral problem of divorcees remarried. In his opinion the second marriages of divorcees, if stable and sustained by a serious Christian life, cannot be considered as totally valueless in a theological sense The last Synod has reminded us of the need for pastoral care of remarried divorcees But this in no way has changed the law of the Church barring them from the sacraments

Kasper's book makes a real contribution to the renewal of the theology of marriage It will help not only pastors in their ministry but students of theology as well

S AROCKIASAMY, S J.

Spirituality

Come and See. Living Experience of Jesus Christ. By J. N M WIJNGAARDS. *Bangalore, Theological Publications in India*, 1980. Pp 254. Rs 15.

Faith does not consist in accepting as true a doctrine about God Faith must be lived personally as an experience of God Being a Christian means knowing God personally This intimate knowledge of God is not the privilege of mystics All Christians can and should live their faith — in modern terminology, experience God. This is the theme of the book

We learn from Scripture that Christ has promised us he would give us a real experience of himself by which we can be aware of his love and his presence in us We should accept his words, live according to his teaching, and in that way allow him to fill us abundantly with his Spirit and life, so that we may radiate him in our daily lives

Saints and mystics show us the way The influence of Scripture in their lives prepared them to experience Christ's work in them They show us the way, each one in his/her particular manner as we can see, v g , in the lives of Symeon the New Theologian, Thérèse of Lisieux, Francis of Assisi, Charles de Foucauld, Teresa of Avila and Simone Weil

This process requires also the contribution of our own effort, our collaboration with God's grace First of all we must 'have time for God', we must put aside some time every day, for silence, reflection and prayer This requirement is more urgent in our days than it was in former ages when there were fewer distractions, less pressure of work, less noise Together with this recollection we must 'internalise' Scripture, viz , God's word must become part and parcel of our own thinking Besides this we must learn to see the otherwordly aspects inherent in all reality, the symbolic power in all things, reflecting transcendent realities Above all we must perceive this symbolic value in the liturgy and the sacramental life of the Church Here, most of all, we must go beyond symbols All this will enable us to recognize the moment when Christ may reveal himself. The section concludes with an important remark "Wanting to see Christ is not a desire *we* have conceived, not an initiative *we* have taken Christ promised he would reveal himself It is he who is anxious to enter our lives in a visible manner But respecting our freedom, he wants us to remove first the obstacles we put in his way After telling us that he rebukes us because he loves us, he gives us this wonderful answer· 'Listen, I stand at the door and knock .'" (p. 250).

Written in a simple language, the book should appeal to all Christians keen on deepening their interior life.

J. VOLCKAERT, S J.

The Way of the Heart. Desert Spirituality and Contemporary Ministry By Henri J M NOUWEN *London, Darton, Longman and Todd*, 1981 Pp 96 £ 1 95

The author affirms that for an authentic ministry in the complex contemporary world, the three essential elements of the spirituality of the fifth-century Desert Fathers, Solitude, Silence and Prayer, still remain well-springs of vitality

Solitude, as a place of conversion and of encounter with God, purifies one's "compulsive self", transforming him into a new man in Jesus Christ with a compassionate heart for ministry In solitude one faces one's own nothingness, and gets the strength to face with realism one's own frightening false-self and its demons As a quality of the heart, solitude creates an infinite capacity to be available for others, especially the weak, the vulnerable, and the broken

To a wordy world that has lost the creative power of communication, silence discloses the mystery of communion. Words get us involved in the affairs of the world, motivated more by curiosity than by service But "to be silent keeps us pilgrims" In contemporary lifestyle "sharing" has become a virtue; but it is hollow and empty without the silence of the heart that keeps the warmth of the Spirit within

Overpowered by an empirical scientific culture, prayer has become an activity of the mind, not of the heart True prayer is "to descend with the mind into the heart" In the heart one comes to see oneself as a sinner embraced by the mercy of God It is this truth that gives us "rest" The short and simple prayer of the Desert Fathers will help us to pray always, because in it the mind is in the heart

Joe MATHIAS, S J

Holiness. By Donald NICHOLL *London, Darton, Longman and Todd*, 1981 Pp 158 £ 4 50

Donald Nicholl ventures into an area where even the angels fear to tread. The title of the book, "Holiness", may sound jarring to the modern ear But the author makes it very attractive to the reader by means of simple, intelligi-

ble language, and a style that is appealing Without any pretension, the author admits that his work is not a fundamental treatise on holiness It is rather a collection of scraps and hints and tips that have been proved useful to a number of people in different walks of life The merit of the book lies in the fact that it upholds strongly the grinding and at times excruciating path to holiness, trodden by thousands of men and women of noble character from many generations and of all religious traditions throughout the world It is from the lived-experience of these holy men and women that the author gathers crumbs of wisdom, presenting them to the modern man so that he too may draw inspiration from them to grow to full humanity by being holy

There is a great sense of Christian realism in the author's approach to Holiness Holiness is like Jacob at Peniel coming to grips with the angel and after the struggle being left with his hip dislocated (p 12) Or again, in the words of T S Eliot, Holiness is "a condition of complete simplicity, costing not less than everything" (p 33) And finally, in the words of the modern mystic, Thomas Merton "No one can become holy without being plunged into the mystery of suffering" (p 130)

Joe MATHIAS, S J

The Fire and the Rose Are One. By Sebastian MOORE *London, Darton, Longman and Todd*, 1980 Pp xv-158 £ 4 95 (Available from Examiner Press Bookshop, 35 Dalal Street, Bombay 400023)

The title of the book is borrowed from T S Eliot's "Little Gidding" The author is known to the readers through his previous books, *The Crucified is No Stranger* (cf VIDYAJYOTI 1979, p 148), *God is a New Language* (cf THE CLERGY MONTHLY 1968, p 190), and others. The present work is a continuation of his search along the line of an existential Christology And in that search he incorporates a lot of deep insights from existential philosophy and psychology, this at times makes the book heavy reading for the average reader

The book is divided into four parts, each with short chapters In the first part the author poses a few relevant questions regarding the 'self', its meaning and unique value in relation to the origin, purpose and end of the universe In the second part, under the title "The Shadow", he makes a very good analysis of guilt, which he explains as failing in "being myself for the other" (p 57) This phrase is the key concept in the book. Jesus, the man without guilt, is the theme of the third part In him the self finds its true meaning, for in his death and resurrection the guilt-ridden self and the world are transformed into the kingdom of God. In the final part the author tries to clarify and situate anew questions that are raised in the area of Christology and soteriology

Joe MATHIAS, S.J.

Encountering the Depths. By Mother Mary Clare, S.L G *London, Darton, Longman and Todd*, 1981 Pp 81. £ 1 99

Mother Mary Clare, a leading spiritual director in the Anglican Church, deals here with a theme that is central to authentic human living, namely contemplation The title of the book explains summarily the profound nature and practice of contemplation The merit of the author is in her ability to speak on a major theme with authority, characterised by a deep sense of spiritual realism and vision

Prayer in general, and contemplation in particular, is seen here as a constitutive element of man's relationship with God and, at the same time, as putting him in living contact with other men This relationship with God and man takes place in the silence of one's heart And in this encounter one gradually acquires an inner capacity for deeper listening, both to the voice of God and the cries of the world As the author rightly says, one who truly listens is also one who obeys This obedience finds expression in apostolic service and action of reconciliation in which the Christian community grows into a common mind.

The author's approach to the spiritual life, drawn as it is from her lived experience as a member of a contemplative order, is simple and convincing, for it is concerned with the here and now of our lives centred on Christ

Joe MATHIAS, S J

Being a Christian Today. By Ladislaus BOROS *London, Geoffrey Chapman*, 1979 Pp iii-124 £ 2 95

The title of this book aptly describes the contents. Boros goes over some of the traditional themes of Christianity in his own deep and fresh way "for contemporary man". In a first chapter on Basic Principles he gives his explorations on what a present-day 'apologetic'

might mean He is aware that "nowadays the very word arouses our suspicion" What he proposes is an outline of a kind of theology of encounter and dialogue with the modern world. In the second chapter he considers how the Christian can honestly *show* his faith to the world Boros gives here "a fresh interpretation of the corporal works of mercy" In a third chapter on Future Prospects he undertakes the exposition *of the demanding aspect of the spiritual works of mercy. The fourth chapter on The Complete Christian is his grappling with the essence of Christian life as set before us by Jesus He does this through the medium of a personal commentary on the Beatitudes*

There are many beautiful things in the book, and some passages are very touching, such as the one on 'gentleness' But there is one element in the book that I found a bit jarring the frequent use of the word 'should' This is a common feature of much theological writing In my opinion, it is also a shortcoming An astute English psychiatrist once remarked "If you want to be sure someone will not do something, tell him he *should* do it" There is a part of us that contains a contrariness which is set in motion by the magisterial 'should' Theologians may thus, unwittingly, be making it more difficult for people to accept and translate into action the fruit of theological thought I would suggest that theologians undertake the exercise of rephrasing their 'should' statements They may discover that this leads to some interesting insights They may also discover the truth St Thomas Aquinas pointed to centuries ago that the teacher who appeals only to authority will leave his students with empty minds, not with knowledge or understanding I make bold to suggest that this is as true in lofty Church halls as it is in lowly lecture halls

Roman LEWICKI, S J

The Human Potential. By Peter HINCHLIFF and David YOUNG *London, Darton, Longman and, Todd,* 1981 Pp 162 £ 4 50 (Available from Examiner Press Bookshop, 35 Dalal Street, Bombay 400023)

English divines have a long tradition of exposing the reasonableness of the Christian religion Paley and Newman are names that come to mind This book is a latter day contribution to that long tradition The authors build their treatment on the experience of the "independence of mind from body". Man is somehow aware that "his personality transcends his body" From this experience of 'personalness' in the universe, the authors move into the questions of revelation, conceptions of God, the meaning of existence, Christ and what he reveals about reality, resonating with reality in prayer, responding to God's action in the Church, and thus discovering "the ultimate indestructibility of Christ's kind of life" *The book is well-written, a reasonably good exposition of Christian reasonableness*

Roman LEWICKI, S J.

Religious Life

Disciples and Prophets A Biblical Model for the Religious Life By Francis J MOLONEY, SDB *London, Darton, Longman and Todd*, 1980 Pp 225 £ 7 95

No serious work worth the name can do full justice to a complex topic like 'Religious Life' without taking into account the insights found in the Conciliar theology and recent Biblical studies The merit of this book lies precisely in going to the sources to trace the origin of the inspiration for Religious Life in the Church The opening chapter, entitled "The Universal Call to Sanctity", gives primacy of importance to the status of all believers as regards the call to holiness In highlighting this fact the author succeeds beautifully in dispelling from the reader's mind some of the unfounded myths about religious life as a higher state of life In doing so he puts religious life in the right perspective, giving it its due place in the life of the Church

The author's treatment of the evangelical counsels of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience is remarkably interesting He makes a thorough examination of some of the traditionally held concepts about religious life in general and vows in particular by means of an exegesis of the well-known Biblical 'proof-texts' Here again the reader feels a sort of intellectual satisfaction in going deeper into the meaning and origin of religious life At times one gets the impression that the author with his scholarly approach tries to force into a text one interpretation as the only possible one Such is the case with Mathew 19·12, used as proof-text about Chastity On the other hand his efforts in reinterpreting the biblical proof-texts in a radical

Continued on p 31 *See also p* 44.

Cum permissu superiorum

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JOURNAL OF THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Third World Theological Conference

Biblical Hermeneutics and Liberation

The Irruption of the Third World

Theological Formation as Sadhana

A Concrete Model of Priestly Formation

FEBRUARY 1982

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Editorial

The Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians was formed in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, in August 1976, when a group of theologians from the Third World held a first intercontinental Conference The aim of the Association is "to foster the growth of theologies relevant to the lives, religions, and cultures of our people and to their struggle for full humanity" Continental meetings followed after the Dar-es-Salaam Conference· Accra, Ghana (1977), Wennapuwa, Sri Lanka (1979) and Sao-Paulo, Brazil (1980) VIDYAJYOTI has given an account of the Asian meeting which had direct relevance to the Indian situation (cf July 1979, pp 245-284) The Fifth EATWOT Conference — the second intercontinental meeting — which took place in New Delhi last August was a land-mark in the life of the Association It allowed the members to reflect on the experience of the last five years, to strengthen their common vision while at the same time broadening it through mutual interaction, and to devise plans for the years ahead

We will return to the Conference in our next number In the present issue, besides the final document, we publish a position paper delivered at the Conference by Fr Severino CROATTO The subject is difficult but of considerable importance Criticism has been expressed of the way liberation theologians use the Bible It is said, among other things, that their interpretation of the Bible is politically oriented and, therefore, subjective CROATTO admits to a political option — of which liberation exegetes do not have the monopoly, even though options differ — but holds that the reading of the Bible from the side of the poor and the oppressed offers the best guarantee of interpreting it correctly The Bible does not merely contain the memory of events gone-by, it is a key to understand the historical processes of liberation at work today, in continuity with the foundational events of the past Because of its great length the paper cannot be published here in its entirety, it is presented to our readers in abridged form.

Our last issue was devoted to the preparation of the Consultation on Priestly Formation in North India which is taking place in Varanasi this month. We publish here two more contributions to the same. For Fr B. Ishanand VEMPENY theological formation is essentially a *sadhana*. Fr J. NEETILAL offers concrete suggestions for a model of priestly formation.

Biblical Hermeneutics in the Theology of the Oppressed

Severino CROATTO

EVERY theology has a starting point Because it is not a "deposit" (even within the most dogmatic and fundamentalist traditions) but a "*production*" continuously changing, it is "motivated", it has a starting point, it is legitimized according to some criteria

In the theological act the praxis and the context of the theologian, on the one hand, and the source(s) of Revelation, on the other, meet. How is the synthesis produced ? One of the poles of reference is certainly the Bible All theologians use it But questions arise "For what purpose ?", "How ?", "By which methodology ?" There are as many answers to these questions as there are kinds of theology

If we want to rethink theology in the light of the new socio-historical situation and processes, which are different and even opposed to those where traditional theological discourse was born, the use of the Bible becomes a new and distinct problem On the one hand, the Bible seems quite distant from the new problems, but, on the other hand, one discovers new possibilities of reading it Such is the case with the theological reflection done in the oppressed countries of the Third World in process of liberation. The tension manifests itself in the Latin American theology of liberation in a very clear way.

The reading of the signs of the times as signs of liberation, the analysis of the social and political reality, the statements of traditional academic theology, the new scientific criticism of the Bible with its refined exegetical methods — all converge towards a question of paramount importance: "What is the role of the Bible in a theology of and for the oppressed peoples of the Third World ?"

Four Possible Attitudes

1. A first possible answer would consist in relegating the Bible to a secondary role, as a text of the past which cannot compare with *the text* of the present reality considered as the first theological "locus".

This reality is so loaded with meaning that any other theological source becomes secondary. When the present options are so clear, it is not necessary to go back to the Bible.

2 A second attitude is to take the Bible as it is and to look for correspondences between our own present situations and the events written in the Bible. Where coincidences are found, they are understood as God speaking through archetypal events This is a "concordist" attitude Biblical concordism, very common in the fundamentalist readings of the holy text, is negative for two reasons First, because it reduces the Biblical message to situations similar to those of the times of Israel or of the apostolic community; secondly, because in the last analysis, it makes a superficial reading of the message at the level of external facts The same danger exists if we look for a *continuity* between the ideas of the Old or New Testament and the ideas of a given culture, Asian, African or Latin American What happens if there are no such cultural coincidences, as is the case, for example, between Hebrew and Greek anthropology? However, the search for similarities between the Bible and the present social and above all cultural reality can become a starting point to explore the relevance of the Bible for the people today What is really impoverishing is historical concordism, i e , the desire to confirm the truth of the Bible with the data of natural or historical sciences There is no such confirmation To attempt it is to empty the text of its kerygmatic content.

3. The critical methodology of modern Biblical studies has opened a new path. By discovering the historical and cultural horizon wherein the Bible was born, they make it possible for us to contextualize and understand better the original meaning of each text Critical exegesis has not only put an end to the naive, historicizing and concordist readings of the Bible, but has significantly widened the investigation of the meaning of the texts. Literary criticism, the criticism of forms, of literary genres and codes, of traditions and of redaction — all have revolutionized Biblical studies in the last decades. They have solved many problems of Christian theology and generated a renewal of theological teaching at all levels

In spite of this achievement, the exaggerated use of critical exegesis has its own risks. On the one hand, it focuses on the "behind", the past of the actual text, its archeology, calling the attention of the exegete or of the reader of the Bible to a pre-canonical time. For instance, the Pentateuch is interpreted according to the "Yahvist", the "Elohist", or other theologies. The *pre*-text is stressed. On the other hand, the preoccupation to establish the "truth" of the human

sciences, so characteristic of the Western world in the past centuries, has concentrated the attention on the *literal* meaning as the "historical" one. (The designation of the method as "*historical-critical*" shows this intention) This leads to reductionism. The interest concentrates on the *intention of the author* of each particular text. Ultimately, this can lead back to the idea that the Bible is a "deposit" with a closed meaning that coincides with the thought of its redactors, or even of the pre-redactors of the actual text. For a Third World theology, this approach is very incomplete, in spite of its merits, which we recognize, at many other levels

4 The fourth way of approaching the Biblical kerygma is hermeneutics, which is the content of this paper Before we begin we need to make a few preliminary observations In spite of its etymology and its ancient use, for us hermeneutics is not a synonym for "interpretation" The latter is a very general concept that does not convey the specific meaning we intend when speaking of hermeneutics Nor are we satisfied with the Bultmannian meaning of "hermeneutics", or the "new hermeneutics" of Fuchs, Ebeling and their followers That in the reading of the Bible there is always a *pre*-understanding is an obvious and accepted fact, and quite valuable for us. To say that the Bible is a "speech-event" (*Sprachereignis*) or a "word-event" (*Wortereignis*) in the full meaning of the expressions does not explain it sufficiently The objective conditioning of the Bible as *language* is not brought out in these approaches, and the original referent of the text is under-played, which results in an individualistic reading.

From Event to Text

Speaking of hermeneutics, we would like to stress the fact that the re-reading of the Bible is not a mere literary activity, a work of specialists. It is not a neutral work. The claim of the exegete that he extracts the pure historical, objective meaning of the Biblical text is an illusion In fact he can hardly discover even the "behind" of the text — and what he really does is to explore the possibilities of the *text* itself interpreted in a new way. The exegete is also part of a tradition, inserted in a historical context, subject to a determined social praxis All this conditions his reading of the Bible and makes it a "re-reading". The Church also, when it interprets the word of God, does the same its reading is "closing" because it is done from a particular context, in other words from the experience of a concrete praxis both religious and political. And the people, what do they do ? Their reading of the Bible is mediated by that of the "experts" (theo-

logians, specialists) and by that of the "powerful" (those in authority in the Church). Yet when they have access to this book, so often forbidden, their reading is surprisingly fertile. This happens, whether they read from a liberation process or from any other situation in which, as people or a community, they are the subjects both of their history and of the reading of the Biblical kerygma. What happens in this case ?

If every reading is production of meaning and is done from a particular context, then what is relevant is not really the historical "behind" of the text, but what is "in front" of it, what it suggests as relevant message for the life of those ready to receive it.

Reading the Bible from the coign of vantage of the theology of liberation, and in general of the people, faces two problems: the Bible is a very large book where one can find almost anything; and it is a book structured and closed by a well-to-do social class, distant from the people — a characteristic, moreover, which is carried on through the centuries in the process of catechesis and theology. But, on the other hand, the Bible has a priceless advantage: its origin is in a people *in a process of liberation*. The Israelite conception of "Yahweh", the God of the Hebrews, is indissolubly bound to the experience of liberation from the slavery in Egypt In this context, the *saving* God is identified with the *Liberator*· "Israel witnessed the great act that Yahweh had performed against the Egyptians, and the people venerated Yahweh, they *put their faith* in Yahweh and in Moses, his servant" (Ex 14, 31). This is a faith that emerges from the experience of liberation From now on it will be the "referent" in the historic-salvific project of Israel its institutions, its feasts, the prophetic denunciation of the betrayal of the Covenant, the announcement of a new order of justice, the Messianic hope — all will recover the "memory" of the Exodus as liberating event. This theology of the God of liberation is strengthened by the theologumenon taken over from the world-vision of neighbouring nations about God (and the King, his vice-regent) as distributor and guarantee of justice and of well-being in the nation. All this constitutes the "semantic axis" at the level of the text and the "kerygmatic axis" at the level of the message. Central to the Old Testament, this axis is continued in the saving message of Jesus in the New Testament, addressed preferentially to the oppressed of all kinds in his option for the poor, and in his death as a prophet rejected because of his word in favour of and his commitment to the people (cf. the programmatic scene in Lk 4, 16-30). The Paschal mystery, hinge of the Christian kerygma, can be interpreted and evaluated in different ways by the authors of the New Testament,

precisely because of its "surplus-of-meaning" as event and as narrative of a tradition that culminated in the text of the Gospels.

Now, the whole Bible must be read as *one* single text, which is not the mere sum-total of a number of literary units but their fusion into one central kerygma, linguistically codified In this great narrative we can recognize those "semantic axes" that lead to the production of meaning as found in our reading of the Bible This is surely one of the tasks of the theology of liberation in its exegetical dimension It is a hermeneutical task which is made possible in our case by the understanding of the Bible as a *long text* that contains a project of salvation to be read in the key of liberation

To take up the Bible as *one* text will enrich the fragmentary reading of pericopes and books Incidentally, we must do away with a study of *words* on 'poverty' or 'liberation', etc , whereby the attention is diverted from the message as a whole to the semantic value of concepts It looks at times as if we are returning to a study of the language or of the dictionary ! We must remember that the primitive Church chose to "re-read" the entire Old Testament as *one complete text* with a unique hermeneutical key (the paschal mystery) This re-reading did not consist of stripping the Old Testament of less appropriate books or of passages that stressed the value of the Law and at times even were in contradiction with the Christian praxis (e g , the custom of anathema or *cherem*, or the ideal of the dominion of Israel over other nations Dt 15, 6, Is 60 12, etc) No, the Old Testament as a unity is Word of God that overflows the contextual meaning of each passage because it is oriented towards the kerygmatic *telos*, that is Christ (Gal 3, 24 with Rom 10, 4) Had the Church trimmed the Old Testament, it would have produced *another* text the reading of which could no longer be an appropriation of meaning of the tradition of Israel This was a decisive issue

We pointed out earlier that the Bible offers an advantage for being read from the point of view of the oppressed or of liberation: it is that its starting point is marked by deep experiences of liberation in which the Israelite faith recognizes the saving God as Liberator. This message was put together later in "creeds" (Dt 6, 20-24; 26, 5-9, etc), in great narratives, in the prophets and in the cult If the tradition of Israel continued on the same theme through so many centuries, it was because the people experienced many events of oppression/liberation Above all we must remember that in the last stage (the post-exilic period when the formation of the canon was fixed) the country was politically dominated by foreign empires (Persia, the

Seleucids, the Romans) and economically oppressed by heavy taxation — both internal and external. This is a sociological factor that helps us to contextualize the moment of the fixation of ancient traditions of oppression/liberation in codes of history and promise. Now, who but the oppressed people of today, specially in the Third World, is most attuned to the kerygmatic nucleus of the Bible ?

Without in any way idealizing the people (a bad service at times done to them by liberation theologians), it is no exaggeration to say that the poor and oppressed have the most rightful "ownership" of the Bible and are in the most adequate context to re-read it. The message belongs to them more than to others The saying, "I was sent for this purpose" (Lk 4, 43), refers to Jesus' self-proclamation in Lk 4 18ff as the one sent "to preach the good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed " They more than any other people live in a context in which the Biblical kerygma touches them profoundly and challenges them.

This understanding of the Bible by the poor as *their* book and as a message most relevant to their lives leads to a holistic reading of the text through its "axes of meaning", whereby the Bible is taken as one single text A leader deeply committed to the praxis of liberation and with a deep Christian formation was telling me recently. "We have enough of the Bible !" He did not say this in disrespect or out of a sense of saturation; what he meant, as he explained later, was that his reading of the Bible had allowed him to understand with sufficient clarity its central message as pertinent to his class, and that what was now needed was to put it into practice in active life. Our reading of the Bible in Christian formation, in liturgy and preaching, in seminaries and faculties of theology, leads to an infinite fragmentation of the text which thereby becomes no longer a "text", but a multitude of "texts" This leaves in our hands a multitude of meanings, valuable in themselves, but leading us astray from the total meaning, from the "axis" For the praxis and theology of liberation it is the axis that primarily matters In the Theological Faculty where I teach some of us professors are attempting a reading of the Bible as *one* text, giving special attention, alongside the historical-critical methods, to the structural approach as a step for our hermeneutics We are just beginning, but the advantages are already perceptible in an ability to "recontextualize" the Bible. It is, however, difficult, in a seminary or faculty, because of sociological conditionings, to read the Bible *from the perspective of the oppressed,* as the place of its relevance and as its right context.

Exegesis and Eisegesis

From what we have said so far it is clear that the exploration of the meaning of a text cannot be completed through mere literary or academic criticism. The praxis of the explorer and his socio-historical context provide the parameters for his complete reading of the text. We cannot just "draw out" (*ex*-egesis) questions which were not those of the biblical authors. We operate from new frontiers of life which make a significant contribution to the *production* of meaning of a reading.

We should remember here that the *whole* Bible, as it has come to us, is the result or the *product* of a long process of hermeneutics wherein the two levels studied above work simultaneously: the level of the socio-historical praxis of Israel, lived and reflected upon by successive generations in historical continuity with the promise and the great saving deeds of God; and the level of "putting down" in literary form (linguistic aspect of revelation) the presence of God, either in historical narratives, or "creeds" or other literary forms. This led to the formation of separate collections, the legal, prophetic, sapiential, historical and liturgical "corpora" and, finally, to *the* definitive canonical text Neither God's revelation (in events rather than in words) nor inspiration (in the texts rather than in the authors !) are isolated phenomena. They rather relate, and complement each other dialectically. The "Word of God" is begotten in the saving event, interpreted and enriched by the words that collect it and transmit it further in the form (or rather in various "forms") of message The relation between the "historical effect" (of the event) and the "meaning effect" (of the text) is very intimate and is continued in the relation between praxis and the reading of the tradition or the text Critical exegesis seeks to understand the production of the texts, theological reading concentrates on the text already produced, exploring its linguistic "surplus-of-meaning" and its character as "God's word". The former is done *from* a particular social and/or theological locus — which means from a praxis — and therefore *ex*egesis is at the same time *eis*egesis, the theological reading, in turn, is conditioned by the structure, the codes and the polysemic symbolism *of the text* (not any polysemy !). This theological reading has to constantly explore, and therefore its *eis*egesis is at the same time *ex*egesis Both are essential in the reading of the text, which is an act of production of meaning. Every reading is a hermeneutical activity, whether it be of the Bible or of any other text, sacred or not-sacred. It is important to recognize this fact. When people criticise the political reading of the Bible done by liberation theology, they are taking a political option from a concrete

praxis with its own political overtones, and a hermeneutical option. They "close" or exclude a political reading because they have opted for another reading, which in fact is equally political though with a different content. Their criticism, moreover, forgets that the Bible is a text "produced" in hermeneutic correlation with the socio-historical praxis of a whole nation, and that it is, therefore, pregnant with politics The Bible is the Word of God for a people seeking to fulfil its *historical* project of peace, justice, faithfulness, love, welfare and freedom.

We must remember that the event begets an interpreting "word", and conversely becomes "foundational" when it is loaded with meaning by successive readings These readings are contextualized at the level of praxis and thereby seek to "enter" into the Word-tradition and are "*eis*egetical". This is how the formation of the New Testament as a re-reading of (and not parallel literature to) the Old Testament in the life of the first Christian Community needs to be explained. Such a process *is part of the very message of the Bible*. In other words, the fact that the Bible is the "product" of a hermeneutic process gives us an important key for reading it; viz., its kerygmatic message is given only within the continuation of the hermeneutic process (event-word) that is at its origin Therefore, to pretend to "fix" its definitive meaning at the moment of its "production" is to deny its very structure as an "open text" Conversely, when read within our socio-historical context (political, economic, cultural, and religious), the text reveals to us new dimensions, rays of light not perceived previously The unexpressed message of the "text" finds expression in the contextual interpretation This is the core of the hermeneutical activity.

Coming back to a theology done from the point of view of the oppressed and the poor of the third world (or wherever they are): to "read" in the Gospel or in the Bible as a great *text* a message of liberation and justice for the oppressed peoples is not to force a meaning into the text but to follow its deepest and holistic "semantic axis". This is a legitimate "entering" into the text, unfolding its "surplus-of-meaning" and "expressing" what was unexpressed in the past. It is necessarily a "closing" reading, leading to conflict. It cannot be otherwise. But, from the perspective of the oppressed, it is the *only* way to a kerygmatic and valid reading.

Such a reading goes far beyond a mere "actualization" of the biblical message, or the "illumination" of our socio-historical reality through the Bible. These two concepts, so often used, do not reach the core of the hermeneutical question, or at least, do not explain it

sufficiently. What could 'actualizing' the Biblical message of liberation mean ? *To express it in new words ? To use the language of the people ?* To transpose semitic ways of expression into patterns closer to us ? To explain in foot-notes the loaded terms which are culturally contextualized in the text ? All this does not go beyond the task of "translation" Even if it enters into the area of hermeneutics, it does not reach its core Or does 'actualizing' the text mean to make the biblical message *effective* in our concrete situation ? Obviously this is the goal But how to make a message of the past effective for a people of a different culture and social surroundings ? Such a process supposes that "we do something" with the *text* in which the message is written It is only by applying the laws of linguistic discourse and by re-calling the process of the event-become-word that we can unfold from the biblical text a meaning that goes beyond its first referent, and discover in it a message which its first expression had not exhausted. This leads us to a *new* meaning, as is characteristic of every hermeneutical reading, and is evidenced by the religious traditions of humankind Has there not been a new Christological reading of the Old Testament during the apostolic times which is reflected in the New Testament ? Why should not *our* interpretation of the Bible be new when we read it from the context of oppression and poverty or within a process of liberation ? We must recreate the biblical message and not only actualize it What we propose here is not something unknown; we simply bring out the implications and the richness of a reading already being done by the oppressed peoples (for instance in basic ecclesial communities) from cultural and religious contexts quite different from the Semitic or the Western worlds. The same type of reading is also being done by theologians who listen to, or perhaps are also involved in, the process of liberation, concientization or cultural self-assertion of the peoples of the third world.

What we have just said also explains the inadequacy of a mere "illumination" of the history of our peoples by the Bible as the Word of God. There is no one-way traffic from the Bible to the event. The hermeneutical circle supposes a reverse movement as a complement of the first The praxis of our faith in a context of oppression/liberation also brings something to the "meaning" of the Bible, keeping it open as "Word of God". For instance, have a new respect and appreciation for the religions of Asia, Africa and Latin America nothing to bring to so many Biblical texts where the religious symbols of the neighbours of Israel are despised ? The cry of the oppressed people, is it not also a cry against an excessively spiritualist and eschatological reading of the New Testament ?

The reader will perhaps ask whether what is being advocated *is not "adding" or "subtracting" from the Word of God* Here we clearly meet the theologoumenon that revelation is ended or closed with Christ, with the last apostle, or with the last book of the New Testament, as various opinions have it. The three expressions are by no means synonyms ! The first expression refers to quality, the second to time, the third to the text. They throw light on one another. Christ is the climax of revelation, but the canonical text culminates in the book of Revelation which gathers the *post*-Easter experience of the primitive Christian community In this understanding, the span of revelation is limited to the life of the Apostles, witnesses of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. This is correct, but too simple. Christ is the culmination, the highest point of God's manifestation in the history of salvation But did God not manifest himself before (even before Israel), and does he not manifest himself after Christ ? And does God's "self-revelation" merely consist in saying words ? The problem begins here and finds its solution in "hermeneutics" the event is gathered by the word-narrative, and this starts its ongoing journey, first as message or meaning *of the* event, and later as "linguistic" message This phenomenon is very significant and is the matrix of the hermeneutical process The event has a "meaning" in so far as it is interpreted Afterwards the *text* (oral or written, but finally written) becomes the carrier of meaning. Finally the text is taken, through a hermeneutical option, as the "canon" that closes other traditions. (A decadent form of this last step closes the "canon" at its own re-reading — it is considered as the "deposit" of revelation) As an event becomes "foundational" in the light of its "historical effects", so also a text can become normative and archetypal within a community that lives already in its atmosphere The canon changes only when the conflict of interpretation reaches such a height that a division is produced in the community· the new groups need to re-make or re-affirm their text of reference, the canon of sacred Scriptures within their religious sphere This is why the faith affirmation that for us the Bible is the paradigmatic text as Word of God is very significant. We do not need new books to be added to the Bible, and, on the other hand, the Christian praxis is definitely oriented by the praxis of Jesus and his teaching (of course, interpreted in the canonical *text*).

Now, one of the "semantic axes" of the Bible is precisely that God reveals himself above all in the events of the history of humankind, his presence there being perceived by faith and simultaneously generative of faith. This process is rightly expressed as a "(re)cognition" of God. The whole idea of an event gathered in the word — the key

to Biblical hermeneutics — refers to this. Prior to the word, God reveals himself in the saving event, with all the consequent "historical effects" that prolong that manifestation The expression of God's revelation in word or in a text is always "posterior". Even the word of "Promise" is now found transmitted through a text that orients it to the event of the "Exodus", *on which the text depends* and of which it is already a re-reading. When the prophet speaks in the name of God, he "reads" or listens to him in the life of his people, in their infidelity or in their suffering — a divine presence articulated as judgment or as promise of salvation Is not the affirmation that "The Word became flesh" (Jn 1, 14) the denial of any attempt to close and enclose the word of God in the *Torah* ? The Torah was a reflection and multiform expression of the revelation of God in history, but it denied its own essence by being transformed into an exclusivist and autonomous word, closed to any new manifestation of God that would modify a reading already apparently fixed by tradition Christ was the new event of God that demanded a re-reading of the Torah Unable to "recognize" the Torah in the life and doctrine of Jesus, many Jews of his time became "non-knowers" of God (Jn 8, 19; 12, 45, 14, 7) This was a hermeneutical problem indeed; but it was also a problem of reductionism of revelation The same cycle is repeated in the history of the Church The theologoumenon that "revelation is closed", in spite of its good intentions, produces a short-circuit in the process of revelation. God-word, instead of God-event-word Do we only possess a word that "illumines" human events and the history of peoples ? Does God say nothing *new* in the struggle of the oppressed peoples, in the processes of liberation, in the contribution of the social sciences to the knowledge of man and his problems, of the reality of the world and its oppressive structures ? We are not speaking only of a newness of revelation in the order of knowledge, nor of the fact that God manifests himself in new modalities never expressed before. Rather, we speak of God revealing himself *in events*.

If this is the case, the epiphany of God must produce an hermeneutic process that will bring forth its own word — the faith discourse in all its variations (prayer, 'creed', proclamation, theology)— a new word. It will not simply be an illumination of present history through the hindlight of the past (the biblical text), but the apprehension of the face of God as it is portrayed *in* the history of men and women. The Bible focuses on reading God in the events of the world and teaches us precisely to recognize him as he manifests himself now, and not as a repetition of the past. Human history is constant newness, and so is the divine presence immanent in it. Christ, the central and highest

event of history, is an unfinished event: Christian Apocalypse awaits his second coming to "close" our history. Christ as Word of the Father (Jn 1, 18 says that Jesus *exegesato* the Father) has not spoken everything He left us his Spirit to teach us all things (Jn 14, 26) and to lead us to the fulness of truth (*hodègesei humas en tè alètheia pasè*; Jn 16, 13) The Bible is the faith-reading of the paradigmatic events of salvation history, and a paradigmatic reading of the unfinished history of salvation. A paradigmatic and normative message, the Bible does *not forbid a re-reading of itself in the light of new events* If it makes no sense to close the revelation of God in history (because it goes against the very central insight of the Biblical message), it also makes no sense to turn the Bible into a closed "deposit" from which we have only to "draw". The Bible, as normative and canonical text of God's saving message, and precisely because it is normative, carries within itself for our re-reading the *new* meaning of the new events of history *Interpretation means accumulation of meaning* *ex*egesis is *eis*egesis, "entering" into the Biblical text with a surplus of meaning that re-creates the original meaning because it is in harmony with it, either as a continuation of the praxis of faith (the level of "historical effect") or through the succession of interpretations or re-readings (the level of the hermeneutic tradition)

These considerations confirm the affirmation that Third World theology must be in opposition to a theology created elsewhere — where undoubtedly it has arisen and continues to arise *from a praxis* with all its political connotations. When *this* theological tradition is transferred to the Third World, it is condemned to become a "theology of the source(s)" (a kind of theology of the Torah) The theology from the oppressed and the poor is a threat and brings conflict: it needs to be repressed It must be disqualified as being anthropological (it stresses human praxis), worldly (it gives value to history), subversive of traditional values, and "marxist" and ideological This opposition is an obvious sign that it breaks into the theological world as an hermeneutic challenge. As theological reflection emerging from the world of the poor, the theologies of (socio-political, cultural, religious, feminine, black, "theological") liberation try to discern and express the new manifestation of the liberating God in situations of injustice and alienation If there is here a new "event" from God, he is "(re)cognized" first by the oppressed who suffer, are being conscientized and fight for liberation; they utter the first "word" (interpretation) of the event.

It is important to stress that the revelation of God *in* the event, and not only in the transmitted word, helps us to understand in depth the Biblical tradition itself. Like all religious language, the Bible

expresses through various literary symbols and narrative codes the "meaning" which *faith* discovers in human events that apparently have nothing extraordinary in themselves. The liberation from the Egyptian slavery was the same event for the Egyptians and for the Hebrews, and could have happened among Cananaean of Libyan slaves of the time. The "representation" of the event as a "crossing of the Sea" or similar narratives is part of the "word"-of-the-event, the word that "speaks" the presence of God acting in history, concretely, in this process of liberation This reflection leads to three obvious considerations

a) The saving event is better "focussed" it is an experience of *liberation,* not the crossing of the Sea, or the plagues

b) The *text* or the account that interprets the liberation event and develops its kerygmatic and theological dimensions acquires a new value Once the liberation event is "read" in the "word", it remains subsumed in it, and the "historical effects" deriving from the event (the praxis that it generates) will equally be sub-sumed in the word in a dialectical and meaning-creating chain.

c) The processes of liberation which we live today are historical events in which faith is capable of "recognizing" the presence of God. We shall not be so naive as to think that God must manifest himself in miracles and extraordinary phenomena as those in Egypt, if we are aware of the way in which religious language emerges The religious account comes "after" the event, and "*reads*" it Is not the liberation of Nicaragua a salvific event, and, from a Christian perspective, a manifestation of God ? To declare it a human political event, and to do so in a *theological* context, is to remain a prisoner of the "deposit of revelation" idea, and to repeat today the perfectly "hermeneutic" attitude of the Pharisees who saw the event of Jesus as "demoniac". Here we come to a challenge for the theology of liberation.

This challenge demands that we discover in the events of today a wealth of meaning that need not "coincide" with what happened in Israel The faith discourse is affected by two conditionings arising from its own power On the one hand, it springs from an experience or an event which in itself is passing and irreversible, while the faith discourse grows constantly as it contemplates the event from new experiences and practical options Distance unfolds the "surplus-of-meaning" of the event and of the account that has already been its first reading. On the other hand, like all language, the language of faith is always culturally and literarily limited Any discourse, while trying to say something to someone about something, implies a limited

context in order to be intelligible. Otherwise it would not be a message. There is no universal language. Even the Bible was not written above time and cultures. It was written for the Hebrew people, and only through many deep re-readings (the New Testament) for Christians of a limited geographical circle. This means that its message is "contextualized" already. To be understood in different historical situations it must be "re-contextualized". If the Christian is able to read the "signs of the times" which for the oppressed and exploited people of the Third World must be "signs of liberation", his reading is in harmony with the "kerygmatic axis" of the Bible, which is itself coded in the "semantic axis" (at the level of the text) about which we have spoken.

Such a hermeneutic perspective, strengthened by semiotics, legitimises the theologies of liberation. That they start from a correct and conscientizing analysis does not mean that they are "sociologies". Is it not important to know the reality wherein the epiphany of God occurs ? Are not the social sciences themselves part of the contextual message from God ? But only the faith perspective can, in a further step, recognize God's call to come out from the situation of slavery, marginalization or oppression, and to experience the salvific presence of the Lord in the process of liberation It is not necessary that this process be initiated or concluded by Christians. What is needed is that they be where the "liberating" God is, otherwise they build an idol-god, a legitimiser of oppression

From the perspective of the faith-praxis within the process of liberation (however ambiguous it may be, however slow or rapid, successful or repressed), theology re-reads the Scriptures as a message for a new social order, the arrival of the New Human being, free and creative, liberated from all form of sin and death (which means, not only physical death but specially its anticipation, misery) There has been an attempt to discount the theologies of liberation for their strong "recontextualization" of the Bible, and to blame them as subjective. Particularly the Latin American liberation theology is criticized for being poorly founded on the Bible In the light of the narrative and kerygmatic "axes" which we have analysed above, we believe that the truth is the other way around At any rate, the accusation of subjectivity made against biblical hermeneutics applies to any theology, as there is no purely "objective" theology The semiotic circle shows that the hermeneutics of the texts *is conditioned by the texts themselves.* The *text* marks the frontiers (however broad they may be) of the meaning. It is not possible to make the text say anything whatever. It speaks what it says. Its polysemy emerges from its first fixation It is there-

fore absolutely necessary to place the text in its first context through the historical-critical methods, and to explore its ability to bring about meaning through the laws of semiotics. Then from the experience of the liberation practice, the reading of the Bible is recontextualized and its "in-front-of-the-text" meaning emerges.

Another common criticism is also levelled, at least against the Latin American theology of liberation, viz., that it uses the Old Testament rather than the New The answer is, first, that the whole Bible is the Word of God Second, the Bible is *one* text, bringing out the continuity between the liberating God, expressed in the life of the people of Israel, and Christ, the liberator of the poor and oppressed (its narrative and kerygmatic "axis") Third, the Old Testament has a larger narrative theology, which offers many examples of historical events seen in the light of the "foundational" event of the Exodus. Fourth, nobody can deny that the Bible is an extremely varied and rich book including many theological trends This is why it is important to see it as one text, at the level of meaning, and to recognize those "axes" about which we have spoken Now, the reading of the Bible made by the theology of liberation is the one that fits best with those "axes" of meaning. Finally, it is important to note that when the message of the Old Testament (e g , the exodus as a saving event with a political and social dimension, lived by a community or people) is taken up again and re-read in the New Testament, it is not lost but on the contrary becomes richer (as it manifests its hidden "surplus-of-meaning"). All reading of the Old Testament is "Christological", and what has been acquired cannot be lost. When liberation theology re-reads the exodus in the light of Christ along the central kerygmatic "axis", its re-reading is done from the stand-point of the oppressed and of structures of dependence, and always takes the Bible as *one* text. Such a re-reading leads up to the foundational event It is important also to remember that some readings of the Christ-event reported in the New Testament itself leave in the shadow important kerygmatic aspects of the Old Testament: for instance, individual sin is much more stressed than the sin of social structures (cf the Prophets), and the eschatologization of the Kingdom (not found in Luke) seems to over-relativise the struggle for a just order in this world Paul contemplates slavery from such a height that it does not seem to affect the reality of the concrete slave (1 Cor 7, 20-24, 1 Tim 6, 1f), and he excludes women from speaking in the ecclesial communities (1 Cor 14, 33b-35 and compare 11, 2-15). In the intention of its author, each text "closes" the meaning Moreover, the message is always contextual and occasional. But, in its transmission, the author dies and

polysemy emerges. This implies a risk and an advantage. the risk *consists in the "decontextualization" that the later reading of the text* will imply.

Let us take the case of 1 Cor 14, 33b-35. Writing to a Greek Church, Paul may not have considered it opportune to reject suddenly a cultural practice, based as it was undoubtedly in the orphic-platonic world view that idealizes man and despises woman. The universalization of the text raises to the level of "doctrine" what could have been only a circumstantial directive. By doing this we "save" Paul, but not the text. And today we read not Paul but the *text* written by him. What is the advantage of this transition from author to text ? We remember that at the linguistic level this passage is within another larger text, the Bible as a whole. In this one single book another affirmation of Paul (Gal 3, 28 "there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus") establishes a more radical principle that subsumes the above directive and leads finally to the source in the Old Testament (Gen 1, 26; and cf Eph 3, 31f). In this *re-circulation* of the text within the "intra-textuality" (if not the "inter-textuality") of the Bible, the Old Testament has not exhausted its meaning, precisely because we read it through the Christological prism. The same nappens with the theology of liberation. There is really no excessive use of the Old Testament The Gospels stress in capital letters the liberating and prophetic actions of Jesus, his death as suffering servant and persecuted prophet, his resurrection as the triumph of life and the divine judgment on the sin of the powerful who crushed him. The Christ event expresses again — in a new hermeneutical key — the salvific message of the Old Testament wherein the liberation of the poor and oppressed is the central theme. If the deeds of the Old Testament lead towards Christ, the liberating activity of our peoples, read from the praxis of faith, leads towards the fulfilment of Christ in a New Humanity.

Theology and Theological Formation in India

Bandhu Ishanand VEMPENY, S.J.

THE vision of theology and theological formation envisaged here is a blurred twilight-vision, and so it is open to criticism, correction and improvement According to this vision, theologizing is not merely "the systematic expression of reflections on faith" but a discipline, a *sadhana*, a sort of "Spiritual Exercises" The core of our view of theologizing is the "self-realization ideal", an ideal found at the heart of the religious ethos of the Orient, and being re-discovered at the heart of the New Testament ethos as well It could be expressed, inadequately though, through currently used concepts like "personality growth", "personal fulfilment" or "fulness of life", or through the oft-repeated sayings "Holiness is wholeness" and "The glory of God is man fully alive".

I. *Situating the Question*

A *An Overall View*

Since Vatican II, theological formation in India has made gigantic strides on the way of achieving its goals Gone indeed are the days when the "sacred science" was taught in Latin, and when the courses prescribed were answers to questions which were no more asked meaningfully and which were irrelevant to the Indian context Today we have reached a stage where "relevance" has become the watchword in theologizing, and "situationalizing", "contextualizing", "inculturating" or "indigenizing" the content of Christian revelation-faith has become the primary concern of most theologians

In spite of all this progress there is a lot of uneasiness and healthy restlessness with regard to theological formation The end-products of this formation, be they lay people, sisters, brothers or priests, do not, by and large, impress Christians as well as non-Christians as the "light of the world", as "leaven in the dough", as "signs of the Kingdom of God", or simply as "men in touch with God". True, we cannot expect everyone to be a Ramakrishna Paramahamsa who could lead an atheist Vivekananda to a transforming experience of God, a Ramana

Maharshi who could make disciples even of the most sophisticated types of people by the silent eloquence of his life, a Krishnabai of Anandashram who could convert to a fervent Christian life a Marxian atheist of the Soviet Institute at Dehra Dun. These are, one might say, exceptions. All the same, our formation seems to produce more "God-talkers" than "God-realizers". And as "God-talkers" are becoming more and more irrelevant and unwanted, they seem to turn into all sorts of amateuristic psychologists and bare-foot societal analysts. To cite just one example, some time back the followers of Acarya Vinoba Bhave looked in vain for a long time in the Christian communities of India for a man of deep learning, utter honesty, genuine religious experience and intense zeal for the total welfare of the nation, to represent Christianity in his *Acharya Samaj* until, at last, a foreign missionary was chosen for this purpose.

It would be a onesided view of theological formation to expect that its end-results be *sadhus* and *sannyasis* bearing witness to transcendence. To carry on Christ's mission of establishing God's Kingdom of love, justice, joy and freedom in the India of today we need people with a variety of charisms corresponding to a variety of functions. Now, a keen observer of the vital sectors of Indian life, like the economic, educational, political and religious, might call this country a smouldering volcano of explosive problems Are our theologically formed men equipped with competence, dedication and courage to face effectively these problems, sharing in some measure God's own power in mountain-moving faith like Paul who said "In him who strengthens me I can do everything"? To bring home the point through an example, a few centuries ago a handful of Jesuit priests could in appallingly difficult circumstances found and maintain for a couple of centuries a republic in Latin America (today's Uruguay and Paraguay) on the basis of brotherly love and co-operation — something which literally remained an 'Utopia' to Plato, Thomas More and others. What was that special thing in their theological formation which we do not seem to inherit ?

B *A Closer View of the Question*

The goal of our theological formation could be described as to produce men who are so united with Christ, who are in such a continuous process of growth into the "full stature of Christ", that this union, by its inner dynamism, leads them to a total dedication to the cause of Christ, to the spread of God's kingdom, like the branches of the Vine bearing fruits in union with the Vine. Such a person would possess the wisdom and love of Christ; he would very much be a "man of God" whom people seek in their moments of trials, temptations,

doubts and calamities. What matters in such a man is not only what and how much he knows, speaks about or does, but what really *he is*, just as Christ was a missionary not only in what he said or did but also in what he really was.

If this is more or less the goal of theological formation, the first question to be asked is whether our present-day theological courses are formation rather than information oriented, whether they are geared to the all-round growth of the individual or to the growth of his knowledge, whether they appeal also to the affective faculties or only to the intellectual faculty

One of the main objections against Christian preaching has been its professionalism which seemed to smack of mercenariness This objection has been raised against Christian missionaries by such great men as Vivekananda, Dayanand Saraswati, Gandhiji, Vinova Bhave and others Is the Christian message something that is programmed from outside, something professionally given to a person ? Or is it the result of the inner dynamism of one's union with Christ and of the challenges of a concrete situation ? If Christian evangelism is a love-communicating movement rather than an information-giving institution, does the present-day "course-theology" meet this demand ?

If Christ is the *alpha* and *omega* of all creation, he must provide the answer to man's quest, like food does for hunger, drink for thirst Christ is eminently relevant for all seasons and for all persons. The genuine Christian message, then, must not fall on neutral ground for its reception but meet the craving and searching of people, though, precisely because of its relevance, it is also bound to arouse hostility. Does our message (institutions, persons, activities and doctrines) reach the real context (economic backwardness, educational impasse, political merry-go-round, casteism, communalism, regionalism etc.) with such aggressive relevance ?

So much for the "*a priori* ground"— to borrow an expression from K Rahner — for the Christian message, considered in general. Now, considering the theological student in particular, does our theological formation seek out his own "*a priori* ground" for the Christian message in such a way that no part of it is thrust into him irrespective of his ability to digest it ?

II. *Some General Remarks on Theology and Theological Formation*

A. *What Is Theology ?*

Anselm's definition of theology as the search of faith for understanding (*fides quaerens intellectum*), apart from its intellectualistic

bias, does not take into account the correlating concept of faith, viz., revelation; nor does it emphasize the importance of contextualizing.

Our basic stance is that theology has to be understood in terms of revelation and faith in their mutual reciprocity and in their contextualized experiences and expressions. We may tentatively define theology as the *expression of a God-man dialogue-experience, grounded on a particular human situation.*

From this tentative definition of theology we may also derive a definition of Indian Christian theology and of Christian theological formation in India. Christian theology in India could be described as: *the expression of a God-man dialogue experience, having for its norm the Christo-centric God-man experiential process of dialogue expressed through the Bible and the living Church, grounded on, and integrated into the religio-cultural, socio-economic, and other sectors of a particular human and Indian situation.*

Theology differs according to differences in the concepts of revelation, faith and contextualizing.

(a) If revelation is understood as God disclosing truths, and faith as intellectual assent to these truths, then theology will be a science appealing to the mind.

(b) If revelation is understood as a challenge from God through his prophets, and finally through his Son, to liberate people from all sorts of oppression, and if faith is understood as a response to this challenge, then theology will be the expression of this divine challenge and human response through liberative action in all the enslaving sectors of human life. South American liberation theology proceeds from an understanding of this sort

(c) If revelation is understood as a self-communication of God as he really is, a reaching out of a God of love who beckons us to enter into union with him by becoming "sons in the Son" (*filii in filio*); if faith is understood as a total self-surrender to God in Christ; if, moreover, this God-man 'dialogue' takes into account the totality of the human situation, then theology will be the expression, even if necessarily always inadequate, of a unique kind of personalistic experience. And the form in which it is expressed will appeal not only to the intellect, but also to the affective and mystical faculties. Here, the theological context will be the totality of the human situation, especially its socio-religious and economico-political sectors. This type of theology has not become popular chiefly because of its great demands on the students and teachers, though the Churches in dialogue with ancient cultures like those of India and China offer the most favourable ground for it.

The whole of the Bible, the Patristic writings and some of the classics of Christian tradition, like the Imitation of Christ, the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius, lead to this type of theology. In the Indian tradition the theology of the Upanishads, of much of the Puranic literature, the vast writings of the saints and Acharyas, and the Tantric and Yogic literature do contain this type of theological expression.

B. *What Is Theological Formation ?*

For a theological formation of the first type, the present day seminaries are sufficient For the second type new types of training centres and a radically different kind of teachers with a very different methodology are needed. Here theological formation would imply not only assimilating the liberating impulses and dynamism of Christ, not only studying and assessing the enslaving structures with tools from the secular sciences and through experiencing the bondage of the people by involvement among them, but also, among other things, evolving programmes and strategies to remove oppression

Formation of the third type takes much more into account the mystical and experiential aspects of the God-man dialogue encounter than does the second type Here formation must be geared not primarily in terms of praxis or mission but in terms of what a person is, and then only and dependent on this, on what he does or speaks As regards contextualizing, here the self-communicating God of the Bible has to be met and the faith-response to be given not only through contact with the existing religions of the place, but also through the socio-economic and other sectors of the situation The emphasis is on providing the conducive atmosphere, disciplines and techniques, and *gurus* capable of fostering religious experience and personality growth, apart from the facilities required for a correct perception of the various sectors of the Indian context In this type of formation the graduation to priesthood will primarily be considered not in terms of academic performance but of personality growth in view of the apostolic call.

C. *Some of the Demands of the Third Type of Theological Formation*

If we accept the third type as a model of theological formation, we must be prepared to make drastic changes in the nature of our theological centres, the method of formation of the staff as well as of the students, and the topics treated. A few of the imperatives can be enumerated

(1) Sound theological and psychological principles coincide in affirming that theological formation has to be in terms of self-realization according to the Christian ideal This is in contrast to an externally prescribed and programmed 'Course-Theology' (first type) which does

not take seriously into account how far such a study contributes to the personality growth of the student according to the New Testament ideals. In our sense, on the contrary, theological formation would become a spiritual discipline, and could rightly be expressed by the term of SADHANA.

(2) This self-realization ideal takes into account the total personality of the student, especially the unconscious realm and the emotional matrix, the numerous psychological blocks that impede the acceptance and expression of love, truth, beauty, etc., and the totality of the context, social, religious, political, economic, educational, familial, etc., with which the student has to be in continuous interaction and dialogue

(3) This ideal would amount to using all the possible means to appropriate to oneself deeply the Christocentric God-man dialogue experience expressed through the Bible and the living Church This ideal "to grow into the full stature of Christ" includes within itself the apostolic ideal of becoming "all things to all men", and so the "missionary formation" is in terms of an overflow of Christ-realization.

(4) The ideal of self-realization through Christ-realization has something of the mysterious, mystical and sacred in it, and, therefore, an atmosphere conducive to its arousal and growth has to be produced in accordance with enlightened religious traditions and psychological insights In providing such an atmosphere an important element is to put the student in touch with the beauty and grandeur of Mother Nature However, experiencing Christ in the hungry, the naked, the homeless, etc, through direct involvement with them, is of capital importance for Christ-realization, especially in the Indian context.

(5) Theological formation according to this Christ-realization ideal needs to be preceded, and to some extent accompanied, by special disciplines from the enlightened religious traditions of India and from psychological schools The aim here will be to lead the student to a deep craving for the eternal Truth, Bliss and Beauty through experience of the relativeness of the phenomenal world which forms part of the basis of any religiosity

(6) This ideal of theological formation envisages not only the integration of Theology and Philosophy but also of all the stages of formation

(7) A growth-oriented theological formation presupposes that each student passes through different phases of growth differently, and in different periods. This implies the personal guidance and attention of a *guru* and is a far cry from the examination-oriented intellectual studies and memory lessons found in many traditional theologates.

A Concrete *Model* of *Priestly* Formation

J. NEETILAL, IMS

A CAREFULLY selected number of students (after SSLC or pre-degree) could be given a year of orientation to the vision and mission of the Church in India and then be made to pursue their studies in local colleges of North India. These have to be planned in accordance with the needs of the local Church, taking into consideration the interest and ability of the candidates There is no point in giving or taking up a uniform kind of studies for graduation. The students have to find their way and style of life as other students in the local college. The diocese could help them with a scholarship, depending on their performance in the college. They shall have a full-time prefect or director to assist them in all things Periodically and regularly he shall visit them at their residence for individual guidance, encouragement, inspiration and motivation. At regular intervals the students shall get together in groups with the director to evaluate their life and performance at group level They are to acquire a community sense and team-spirit and a vision of their future ministry After B A. or a similar examination they could decide whether or not to undertake definite priestly formation for work in the diocese. If they opt for this training, they shall apply for admission. If the diocesan authorities, who have been guiding the candidates so far, respond to them favourably, they qualify to enter into priestly formation. The integral formation in philosophy and theology should be done in existential involvement with the people. Of course in this process there may be many drop-outs. The Church in North India need not be unnecessarily concerned about this, considering that those who break away from the definite training programme shall be a valuable asset to the Church, if we have succeeded in giving them a vision of life and a motivation to live it in the light of the Gospel.

An Integral Formation

In view of a contextualized pastoral formation a way must be sought to integrate the academic course of philosophy and theology into the life of the students and staff. Relevance, meaningfulness and

orientation to the ministry (which is already begun) must form the criteria for this integration Again the students must live their life in existent al identification with other students and be truly involved with *and for the people of their locality* There has to take place an integration or combination of reflection (with experience and problem oriented study) and action (involvement) during the period of formation itself. The future ministry cannot be seen in isolation from life in formation.

A pastoral/missionary formation for our country demands changes in the (i) structures, (ii) methodology, and (iii) content of today's seminary formation.

1) *Changes in the Structure*

We need a re-structuring of the existing seminaries and houses of formation into basic core groups (teams) The students in formation must live with the people and during their studies be engaged in relevant and planned involvement with and for the people They shall be guided by a mature leader or Guru, and the whole group shall function as agent for change in North Indian society. They shall help to form the conscience of the people and to transform society in all its strata in accordance with the spirit and values of the Gospel Their goal or objective must be evangelization in its wider sense, as proposed in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*

The students shall, as far as possible, lead a life identical to that of other students in the same locality, less institutionalized and programmized than has traditionally been the case Even their personal budget shall be on par with that of other students, though supported from the diocese — a lesser evil Keeping the goal clearly in mind, their training shall not be merely examination-oriented, nor ordination-oriented. Their primary concern shall be people and action towards their integral development. Their norm of life cannot be a discipline imposed from outside, and external conformity demanded by the authorities. They shall base themselves on inner freedom, self-reflection and self-criticism, resulting on the one hand from their faith-experience in the light of the Gospel, and on the other hand from their life-experience in identification with the struggling masses It is no easy task to articulate, thematize and give appropriate living expression to the faith-experience once it is confronted with life-experiences; for this they need help. But a constant attempt at doing it will be doing theology in context. It shall require hard work from the group, common searching, struggling and sharing together with a competent animator. They shall always be on the look out to overcome their self-

isolation and to relate themselves to the ecclesial body for guidance and inspiration. But I would not like to have their formation compartmentalized into philosophical, theological and pastoral training, a scheme according to which the student is first given a purely exam-oriented academic training with a large fund of speculative information and then asked to apply it (often irrelevant) to pastoral problems and needs

2) *Changes in Methodology*

At present theology is taught and learnt in the class room as an academic subject. There is overdependence on the traditional lecture-method with an emphasis on uncritically accepting theories of the past isolated from life-issues and endowed with 'perennial' value and 'infallible' certainty. The starting point of this theology is a body of doctrines of the Church. The theologian's function is to defend and expound these theories, making use of a deductive method and trying to justify them against all adversaries. In this approach there neither is any meaningful contact with the challenges of the people nor are the contributions of other human sciences and the dialectic inter-relationship between theology and political and sociological analysis seriously taken into account or recognized. This is not *doing* theology.

Doing theology is an encounter between faith and life, a confrontation between our faith-experience and reality-experience. It is possible only when students and teachers of theology live in constant contact with the community Perhaps the method of domestication and indoctrination we are very much used to in the Seminaries must be replaced or supplemented with a method in which the critical thinking, self-discovery and self-development of students are fostered. The emphasis can never be on academic standards and achievements but on relevance and the real needs of a people-oriented ministry.

The widely known method of "Action-Reflection-Action", as adapted for example in the Indonasian seminaries, may be of some help. We could think of a method whereby theological formation would take place both in the class room and in the community which reflects the contemporary Indian situation, living the hopes, aspirations, achievements, doubts, despair and suffering of the people. One can get into a serious study of even traditional theological and philosophical disciplines by approaching them through the issues and needs that arise from practice, of course bypassing topics that are totally irrelevant, keeping in mind the goal of our formation and ministry. Concretely it would mean the following steps:

a) *Experience of Indian reality in its entirety.* The religious, socio-economic, cultural and political realities of our country, as lived by the majority of our people today, must be experienced by the group of our students.

b) *Reflection on the experience.* The specific Indian reality is to be analysed, confronted and made meaningful in the context of our faith-experience, in the context of the plan of God for the world as revealed to us in Jesus Christ Out of this dialectic arises a contextualized theologizing. Our faith-experience, or, more obejctively, the plan of God for us as grasped by faith, must be deepened through serious study, analysis and reflection on the history of salvation and its sources, namely the sacred scriptures, the living traditions of religions, etc., guided by competent persons.

c) *Commitment to action.* An integral experiential method of formation has no relevance if it is limited to class rooms and speculation in the air It has to be a learning through doing. A contextualized theological reflection starts from the life-issues and problems Naturally it has to lead to action by way of solutions to the problems. In other words the students in formation must get themselves fully involved in the struggles of the people during their formation itself This very involvement becomes in turn part of the content of their further reflection and critical analysis and a new incentive for deepening their own faith (The details of the contents of the intellectual formation of our students are to be carefully worked out by competent persons.)

When the students in formation have spent a considerable number of years under the direction of a mature director in the way suggested above, leading a life in close contact with the realities of the struggling masses and working for their integral development, they could offer themselves to the ministry of priesthood in the Church If they are found capable of assuming the type of leadership the Church in India needs today, they shall be 'ordained' or given the official recognition in the Church. (I shall not go into the details of the necessary qualifications expected of them. They must definitely be people driven and moved by the person, mission and message of Jesus Christ, able in turn to inspire and lead others, thereby continuing his mission for the sake of a particular people whose leadership they will be assuming. The type of priesthood they will assume may be different from the one being exercised today. But this is not our point here.)

Ambiguities

While proposing a definite and somewhat radical model of formation I do experience serious ambiguities that cause seemingly irreconcilable

tensions within the Church. Unless these ambiguities are cleared and the tensions reduced, unless also differences are tolerated while we work at a common vision, taking seriously our Indian context in its entirety, *the above mentioned model may not be acceptable. We need here a strong will and courage for experiment Fear of risk will not help. I mention here only a few areas of tension resulting from serious* ambiguities that have arisen mostly from the changes we have experienced in the post-Conciliar Church

1. Changes in the understanding of theology, its starting point and methodology;

2. Changes in the concept and vision of evangelization;

3. Ambiguity in the goal of the ministry in the Church,

4. Changes in the understanding of faith and revelation;

5. Contextualization· Change of emphasis in the analysis of the total context,

6. Changing image and role of priests

Uravu Oru Thodarkathai By S Arulsamy *Bangalore, St Peter's Pontifical Seminary,* 1980 Pp 166 (No price given)

This is a treatise in Tamil on the theology of Grace Grace is not a 'thing' but a relationship, a sharing in the life of God The author gives an account of the various aspects of this relationship in four parts, avoiding abstract and scholastic forms of expression

The first part describes the relationship itself, how it is broken by sin an how it is restored through reconciliation The second talks of the effects of the relationship it is a life with Christ through which we become sons of the Father and temples of the Holy Spirit, thus it gives us a share in the life of God. The third part shows the relevance of this relationship to our day-to-day life our need to be docile, to listen to the Spirit, to experience his presence and to grow in it The fourth part shows that the life of grace is possible only in freedom The sacraments and the charisms are the gifts of the Spirit helping us to enter more deeply into the life of God An Appendix introduces us to the concept of grace in the Advaita, the Bhakti and the Saiva Siddhanta traditions in Hinduism

The presentation is clear and simple, solidly based on the Bible The book is warmly recommended as a welcome addition to the growing theological literature in Tamil

M Amaladoss, S J.

Document

FIFTH CONFERENCE OF THE ECUMENICAL ASSOCIATION OF THIRD WORLD THEOLOGIANS

(*New Delhi, August* 17-29, 1981)

The Irruption of the Third World: Challenge to Theology

Introduction

1 The Fifth Conference of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT) met in New Delhi, from 17th to 29th August 1981. The participants, 50 in all, came from 27 different countries representing Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, and the USA of Minority Groups and included observers from Europe and the USA We thank God for bringing us together within a common concern for the oppressed and suffering peoples of our continents. We are grateful for the experiences we have shared and the tasks to which we have been challenged

2. The EATWOT was formed in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, in August 1976 to foster the growth of theologies relevant to the lives, religions, and cultures of our people and to their struggles for full humanity.

3. In Dar-es-Salaam, we examined the political, social, economic, cultural, racial, and religious contexts of the Third World. We took note of the challenge they pose to Christian theology and to Christian witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ We proposed new approaches and tasks to the theologians of the Third World We also made an appeal to the Churches for a self-evaluation before God in the face of global oppression.

4. The Conferences of Accra, Ghana, December 1977, of Wennapuwa, Sri Lanka, January 1979; and of Sao Paulo, Brazil, February 1980 continued this work with special reference to the context of each of the three continents.

5. It was after five years of theological research and reflection that we met in New Delhi to evaluate our work, to put our insights and resources together, and to seek new direction for the future.

6. India was an appropriate venue for this Conference. The seventh largest country of the world with 680 million people, it has played a leading role among Third World countries in their struggle for independence and autonomy. The enormous richness of its tradi-

tional cultures, the variety of its ancient religions, its industrial and technological development, and the wide contrast between its rich and its poor, make India a typical representative of Third World realities, challenges, and hopes.

7. Our point of reference was always the Dar-es-Salaam Conference of 1976, where the Association was formed and the program formulated. The unanimous decision of the group was to reaffirm the basic thrust of the Dar-es-Salaam and the other Conferences. This time in Delhi we deepened our Christian fellowship and discovered new common traits in our theologies, but we also saw that in language and approach these theologies had considerable differences. We came to realize that it was premature to talk of a synthesis of the past five years, or to describe Third World theology as one.

8. The present document is a working instrument for further study and reflection — a document of transition from the first five-year period to the new program of another period of five years. From the many theological issues discussed a few have been selected for inclusion here because of their importance for theology of the Third World. These issues, to be further refined and deepened, will be the core of our work for the next five years.

Challenge of Reality to Theology

9. The analysis of the situation of the Third World countries presented in reports from the various regions and continents disclosed a general agreement that poverty and oppression are the most glaring characteristics of the Third World: massive poverty surrounding small islands of affluence and an oppressed majority vis-à-vis a powerful elite.

10. Massive poverty grows and spreads like a mortal plague over the Third World where the majority of humankind lives. But this poverty is not an innocent social fact. It is the result of structures of exploitation and domination. Much of it stems from centuries of colonial rule and is reinforced by the present international economic system.

11. The people are also dominated by the local elite in the Third World so that the masses are subjected to a double oppression at the national as well as the international level. The local elites, in conjunction with international capitalist forces, determine patterns of development for the people, sacrificing the common good in favour of exhorbitant profits for the few.

12. The underdevelopment of the Third World is the result of the process of international exploitation and accumulation by the rich countries. The rich world imposes an ordering of international relations which throws the Third World into extreme misery that keeps worsening every day. What makes this situation more difficult is that technology, an essential element for our development, is controlled by the rich nations making our dependence greater.

13. This situation has brought about not only untold suffering and diminishment of every aspect of the people's life — economic, political, cultural, racial, religious, and spiritual — but also untimely death to children, men and women by the millions Poverty dehumanizes not only the countless poor, but also the rich in that they benefit from the suffering of countless others and grow insensitive to *the claims of life.*

14. Although material deprivation and economic exploitation are blatant and shocking *realities of the Third World, other types of* poverty and oppression exist which are interwoven and interrelated. Classist oppression is compounded by discrimination based on race, colour, sex, and caste.

15. Caste is a mighty, divisive, and oppressive institution in India, deeply entrenched in the very flesh of the people and infecting all the limbs and movements of the nation As a stratification of society on a hierarchical pattern of relationship, the caste system has its peculiar features, but it has also common elements with racist and classist structures elsewhere. Used for long as tool and technique of divide and rule, caste still acts as the main obstacle to the unity and organization of all the exploited for an effective struggle against oppression in India.

16 Racism is an evil still present in many societies in the world, expressing itself in various forms of dehumanization and segregation Racist attitudes and policies have condemned the colonized and subdued populations to a condition of subhumans In South Africa especially, the ideology of apartheid ensures that at all levels whites dominate. Furthermore, the usurpation of the primal lands of the Black people by the whites has placed them in a frightening state of dependency.

17. Women everywhere and at all levels suffer immensely from the male-dominated patterns of culture and social organization Although they have contributed to the development of Third World countries, they have been accorded up to now "minority" or inferior status. Women's oppression has been made more evident by their general absence in decision-making positions even in things that radically affect them This is true not only in society at large but in the Churches as well *All religions without exception are guilty of* discriminating against women

18 With the coming of capitalism and modernization in our Third World societies, there are additional evidences of women's inferior status: inequality in job opportunities and the pay scale alike Society on the whole has not recognized the economic value of women's *full-time work of rearing children and keeping the home* In Asia in more recent times, with the mushrooming of international tourism and free trade zones, Asian women have been forced to become part of the cheap labour market with inhuman and dangerous working conditions making them vulnerable to sexual exploitation that eventually leads them to succumb to prostitution. In the case of migrant labourers

to the Middle East, women are subject to abusive treatment especially in their role of housemaids. Worse, there are hardly any legal defenses of their human rights.

19. Poverty was not a univocal term at the Conference. While the majority stressed material poverty, others, particularly the Central Africans, emphasized anthropological or cultural poverty. For them this means the general impoverishment of their people. Colonialism has brought about a loss of their identity and a diminishment of their creativity. It indiscriminately disrupted their communal tribal life and organization and destroyed their indigenous values, religious beliefs, and traditional culture. This result of the ravages of colonialism is now maintained by economic and cultural neo-colonialism.

20. Western domination has also harmed the native cultures and religions The change in the mode of production has affected and often damaged the patterns of social and religious values that have shaped our communities for centuries. This has had serious consequences on the Indian and Black population of Latin America, the tribal societies in Africa, the millions of adherents of other world religions in Asia, and marginalized groups everywhere. The missionary enterprise and traditional theology, by imposing Western values, sometimes unwittingly, have also contributed to the cultural impoverishment and brokenness of the Third World

21. The U S minorities find themselves in a difficult position as they describe their reality as an internal colony. They are discriminated against by the dominant Anglo-Saxon political and cultural system and at the same time identified with the First World by their Third World brothers and sisters. The Caribbean is the centre of a new offensive of American cultural and economic imperialism.

22. The rich countries are not without their serious problems. The process of accumulation of wealth and power in the hands of the few transnational corporations and rich nations is leading to a new crisis at the very centre of capitalism Recession, inflation, large scale unemployment, are signs of such crisis. This crucial situation forces the capitalist countries to defend their economies in ways injurious to the Third World.

23. Moreover, there is also a crisis of culture in the capitalist countries. There is a diminishment of the quality of life and relationship. This shows itself in youth unrest, exaggerated individualism, alcoholism, drug addiction, violence, loneliness, increasing rate of suicides, wasteful life-styles, etc. The wasteful life-style of the affluent in the capitalist countries is leading to an inevitable despoiling of nature and depletion of natural resources, dangerously threatening the future of nature and human life itself.

24. In face of this dim picture of the capitalist world, socialism seems to offer the only viable alternative. However, socialist countries both in the Second World and in the Third World have their own problems to solve. From the Dar-es-Salaam Conference to today,

we have experienced a growing concern about the way socialism is implemented. Struggle for civil and political rights, demands for greater participation, unemployment, internal power struggle, conflicts among socialist nations themselves, dependence on capitalist economy, and remnants of feudal-capitalist mentalities and institutions are some of the issues present day socialist countries have to face.

25 Our present reality is more threatening due to the immediate danger of nuclear annihilation that faces all of humanity today. Humankind is faced as never before with the literal alternative of survival or annihilation The arms race and nuclear build-up are not isolated phenomena. They are organic consequences of the new crisis of the global capitalist system. Structurally, capitalism needs arms production and war. But even though the initiative for the arms race comes from the West, it has forced socialist countries like the USSR into an arms build-up just as ruinous This competition has become a threat and a burden to all countries of the world. We believe that to survive, the only wise course for the Third World countries is to stay away from this ruinous race; to resolve their own problems peacefully, without being trapped by industrialists who promote wars; and to help create an international movement against war, arms build-up and nuclear threat.

Irruption of the Third World

26. Over against this dramatic picture of poverty, oppression, and threat of total destruction has arisen a new consciousness among the downtrodden of their stark situation This growing consciousness of the tragic reality of the Third World has caused an irruption of the exploited classes, marginalized cultures and humiliated races. They are bursting from the underside of history into the world long dominated by the West It is an irruption expressed in revolutionary struggles, political uprisings, and liberation movements It is an irruption of religious and ethnic groups looking for affirmation of their authentic identity, of women demanding recognition and equality, of youth protesting the dominant systems and values. It is an irruption of all those who struggle for full humanity and for their rightful place in history

27. Since the vast majority of the Third World people are those of other faiths, the irruption of the Third World is an irruption of a world that is not Christian. It is bursting into history with a voice of its own demanding justice and equality, reaffirming its age-old religions and cultures, and challenging the West-oriented and narrowly Christian understanding of the world and of history. No social revolution in the Third World can be effective or lasting unless it takes into account and incorporates the religious experience of the people This dawned upon our Conference with a tremendous impact

28. The struggles of the oppressed for liberation throughout history are not accidental or isolated events; they are part of a dialectical process. They are a reaction to overwhelming oppression, and as a

consequence, they elicit the violent counter-reaction of the oppressors. Threatened by the rising tide of the Third World, the powerful centres of capitalism, together with their local allies in our countries, have used every means to squelch all efforts towards liberation; they have stepped up repression and redoubled their capacity to destroy and to kill. Human and social rights have been suppressed. Imprisonment without trial, torture, disappearances and outright murder have become commonplace in many of our countries. Millions of our people have been displaced, expelled, or forced into refugee camps, uprooting them from home and families In many countries of the Third World, under the ideology of the national security state, military and dictatorial regimes have been set up to counteract the irruption of the masses The police and para-military groups act with impunity against their own people, strengthened by the latest technology and systems of amassing information and the most modern instruments of torture and repression To aggravate matters for Christians, there has been an upsurge of reactionary forces within Christianity that have opposed liberation struggles of all forms and reinforced the repressive stance and policies of their governments

29 Our analysis of the world situation and especially of the Third World looks grim and discouraging But as believers in the person, message, and power of the Risen Christ, we see at the same time signs of life and hope amidst the darkness and injustice We see hope in the rise of popular movements and the growth of basic Christian communities in Latin America, the anti-colonial struggles and the revival of traditional religions and cultures in Asia and Africa We see some hope in the pressure for a New International Economic Order and the demand for an effective North-South Dialogue We see as promising some of the socialist experiments in the Third World and the movement towards people's democracies with a strong anti-imperialist thrust The struggle against racism and sexist domination has become reinforced Marginalized cultures and religions are asserting their will to autonomy and freedom. Communities of Christians and of other faiths by their commitment to the poor and oppressed are proving that religion is not the opium of the people. Bonds are deepening between the oppressed of the Third World and the exploited minorities of the rich countries. We are encouraged by developments in the First World such as the feminist movement, the search for alternate life-styles, the ecological defense of nature, anti-war and anti-nuclear organizations and the networks of solidarity with Third World causes.

30 Lastly, we are strengthened by the reaffirmation of our commitment to the Gospel of life, love, and justice. We believe that life can be more authentically human and in keeping with Biblical revelation through a more egalitarian and communitarian reorganization of our societies We believe that the fundamental intuitions of pristine socialism are closer to the Gospel teaching than the tenets of capitalism Yet we are critical of the weaknesses of the existing and historical experiences of socialism while appreciating their accomplishments. Socialism has to face these weaknesses which need to be seriously

analysed and evaluated, and where possible, challenged by prophetic witness to the Gospel values.

31. We reject capitalism that has been responsible for most of the evils of our societies both from within and outside. The challenge to the Third World countries is to work out viable forms of socialism that would bring about economic development as well as respect their religions, cultures, and human freedom We commit ourselves to this search with hope and determination and in collaboration with all peoples struggling for the same ideal.

Inadequacies of Traditional Theology

32 After the study of our reality and its challenges, we looked at the response of the Church and theology We saw that the official mainstream theology of the Christian Churches continues to be Western with little relevance to our Third World situation Though this traditional theology has provided an impetus for personal spirituality and for tremendous missionary expansion, it has been incapable of responding to the social problems of the First World and to the challenges of the Third World For the Third World, this theology has been alienated and alienating. It has not provided the motivations for opposing the evils of racism, sexism, capitalism, colonialism, and neo-colonialism It has failed to understand our religions, indigenous cultures, and traditions, and to relate to them in a respectful way

33 The tools and categories of traditional theology are inadequate for doing theology in context. They are still too wedded to Western culture and the capitalist system Traditional theology has not involved itself in the real drama of the people's lives or spoken in the religious and cultural idioms and expressions of the masses in a meaningful way It has remained highly academic, speculative, individualistic, without regard for the societal and structural aspects of sin.

34 The Bible itself has not always been used to convey the liberating message of Jesus Oftentimes it has been used to legitimize Christian participation in oppression, and to benefit the dominant race, class, and sex

35. Theology has often been unable to dialogue with other world religions in such a manner as to be enriched by the centuries of wisdom and profound faith experiences of their followers It has frequently failed to recognize the world-views that do not correspond to that of the West.

36 To make theology relevant to the lives of our people, new approaches and perspectives are necessary In recent years there have been attempts in the Third World to evolve a theology based on Biblical reflection on struggles for liberation. There are also efforts towards the inculturation of theology from the cultural-anthropological perspective

37. In the First World these past five years we have noted some changes in theological approach For the first time, some European theologians are talking about European theology over against the old

concept of universal theology Some theologians in the USA are reviewing their theology and accepting the challenge of liberation theology from Latin America. They are responding to the demands of their own situation as the centre of the capitalist world and at the same time the home of many oppressed minorities Churches and Assemblies in both the First and Third Worlds have begun to undertake the task of revamping theology to make it more relevant to the times and to their constituencies

Elements of an Emerging Methodology

38 We have realized the inadequacies of traditional theology, and in the last five years, we have made some efforts to develop some general criteria that will make our theology more relevant. In our conference, we both reiterated and reformulated some of the elements of our emerging methodology.

39 Action in service of the people is necessary for genuine theological reflection, but equally necessary is silent contemplation To be committed to the people's struggle for social justice and to contemplate God within this involvement — both form the essential matrix of theology Without this prayerful contemplation, God's face is only partially seen and God's word only partially heard within the participation in God's liberating and fulfilling action in history.

40. The poor and oppressed are emerging from their culture of silence to speak their word in the world that has long tried to deny their existence They have the elementary right to think. To reflect on their own lives and their own faith in God, the Liberator, is part of that right to think and exist In this context, to do theology is no academic exercise Many groups of grass-roots Christians are reflecting thus from their own liberating praxis — at times together with persons of other faiths and persuasions.

41. The faith-based life-interpretations of the grass-roots, expressed in their cultural idioms, liturgies, workshops, story-telling, drama, songs, and poems, constitute genuine theology. In its formal sense, as an art and a science, theology is a discipline which requires technical or academic competence — but both forms of theology are relevant only if they stem from involvement and a liberated consciousness.

42 The Bible is an integral basis of our faith reflections. There have been attempts to re-read Scriptures from the underside of history. Some critics consider this method of interpreting the Bible as subjective. With the help of the biblical scholars at the conference, we examined the broad principles of hermeneutics Among other things, we were reminded that a religious text is based on an event, the praxis of a specific group, for example, the Exodus. The text however does not exhaust the meaning of an event. Every reading is done from the perspective or mind-set of the reader. Even the technical scholar reads out of a particular perspective. The Exodus itself, as the foundational event of the life of Israel, was read differently at different stages in the history of the Jewish people, in the Old and New Testaments,

So today the reading will be conditioned by our historical experience. And even our present reading will not exhaust the meaning of this event.

43 Social analysis is an indispensable mediation and basic equipment for a liberating theology. It indicates the way in which the values of the Kingdom of love, justice and truth are being realized or denied in our situations. Without an adequate understanding of our societies, theologians cannot interpret the will of God for our societies and our times

44 We are convinced that a relevant theology for the Third World should include both the cultural and socio-economic aspects of the people's lives In most theological efforts today, stress is on one to the near exclusion of the other Most of the Latin Americans realize that their liberation theology has failed to include the cultural dimension of their people and the aspirations of marginalized groups of their continent Some Africans, on the other hand, in stressing anthropology, traditional cultures and religions, tend to give little consideration to the contemporary economic and political plight of their peoples At the Asian Theological Conference in 1979, it was strongly propounded that Asian theology must focus both on Asia's poverty and religiosity. Clearly the synthesis of the religio-cultural and socio-economic elements remains a necessary task of Third World theology in the future

Theology from the Oppressed

45 The starting point of the theologies of the Third World is the struggle of the poor and the oppressed against all forms of injustice and domination The *involvement of Christians in this struggle* provides a new locus for theological reflection This participation is faith in action and the manifestation of Christian commitment which constitute the first act of theology (Dar-es-Salaam Statement)

46 The struggle for a just world and full humanity is a participation in God's creative plan God the Creator, Father/Mother of humanity, entrusted the earth to the whole human race to be developed as means of life and fulfilment for all (Gen 1 28-31) It is also a participation in Jesus' mission to bring to humankind life in abundance (Jn 10 10) It is one of the highest expressions of Christian love inspired by faith leading even unto death for the sake of the other (Jn 15 12-13) It is a new dimension of a long tradition of love and service to one's neighbour that goes to the biblical roots (Lev 19·9-18, 1 Jn 3: 11). Effective love and the work towards a world of justice for our neighbour is more acceptable to God than holocausts and burnt offerings (Hos 6 6, Jer 6: 20, Mk 12 33)

47 Poverty as experienced by the majority of God's children is a degradation of the divine image on earth and a diminishment of human dignity and personhood It is a social sin to be attacked and eradicated. The exigencies of the Gospel of love and sharing can be best experienced and articulated by those who are in need, by those who suffer, by those who are abused It is the wounded who knows the

pain of wounds The oppressed are those who best understand and are receptive to the promises of the Kingdom (Mt 5: 3-11; Lk 10: 21). The oppressor is insensitive to the demands of justice and love.

48. Poverty and oppression are universal pehnomena in the Third World The groanings, yearnings, and cries for liberation of the masses reach out to heaven, and as in the days of Moses, God continues to be Yahweh the Liberator, who sees the affliction of the people and comes to deliver them (Ex 3 7-9). *In the struggle against oppression, God is revealed to be the saving God who acts in history* The experience of the Third World as a source of theology must be taken seriously

49 Women are especially discriminated against in the Third World Theology both in the First World and Third World has for too long been a male, white theology and should be liberated from these constraints The sexist interpretation of Scripture to legitimize the subordination and oppression of women must be recognized as sinful and seriously impairing biblical revelation that God created the human being according to the divine image "Male and female God created them" (Gen 1·27) Theology and the Church should be sincere in expressing this act of divine creation, and not merely making more room for women in disciplines and institutions that continue to be patriarchal at heart The common human experience of women in their liberational struggle constitutes a true source of theology Christians must seriously consider the grave injustice towards womankind in their action and include the women's perspective in their theological reflection Otherwise there can be no truly relevant theology, no genuine social transformation, no holistic human liberation.

50 Racism is another form of oppression for millions of men and women all over the world It is especially felt in South Africa where, to many Blacks, Christianity is the religion of the oppressor which has long supported the prevailing ideology of apartheid. When Black people struggle to regain their humanity both by their fight against the socio-political structures of apartheid and by their challenge to the distorted image of Christ, God is involved in that struggle against racism, and theology cannot ignore this dimension of God's presence. God works justice for all who are oppressed (Ps 103 6)

51 God has expressed judgment on oppression and rejection of every form of injustice God assumes the suffering of the weak and powerless in Jesus Christ (Is 53 4-6) The oppressed are the presence of the crucified God But the crucifixion is not the culmination of Jesus' life or of our faith He was raised from the dead and, once and for all, he pronounced victory over the forces of darkness and death In the struggle of the weak and powerless for light and life, the resurrection of Jesus becomes a historical experience and the resurrection of the downtrodden begins

52 This is the liberative praxis of the oppressed of the Third World The faith reflection on this experience is authentic theology, and theology born of praxis is theopraxis In the Third World, the

poor and oppressed themselves are beginning to articulate their own reflections in both oral and non-verbal forms. Though unsystematic and non-professional, this theopraxis — this faith-based interpretation of the struggle and religious experience of the poor by the poor — is a rich foundation of theological formulations in the Third World Since the poor are truly irrupting, then the God-image and expression of the poor must equally irrupt as the most meaningful image and expression of God in today's world

Theology of Religions and Culture

53 Culture is the foundation of the creativity and way of life of a people. It expresses their world-view, their conception of the meaning of human existence and destiny, and their idea of God It includes the historical manifestations of the people's creativity such as their language, arts, social organization, philosophy, religion, and theology itself Thus religion is culturally conditioned.

54 Though in Latin American and the Philippines, most of the people are Christians, in the rest of Asia and in Africa, which constitute three-fourths of the population of the Third World, the vast majority belong to other faiths If this majority are irrupting into the world of the Christian, then Third World theology, to be truly meaningful and liberational, must speak to and through this world that is not Christian Otherwise theology becomes an esoteric luxury of the Christian minority Third World Christians are under the obligation to be alert to the claims of the oppressed of other faiths and to grasp the implications of their demands for the liberation of humankind as well as for a more profound understanding of God and of history

55 The religions of the Third World peoples have shaped their life and thought for centuries although these religions too have been affected by colonialism, the missionary enterprise, and traditional theology History shows that the world religions have generally contributed to the alienation of the masses But at different moments of history, they have also proven to be powerful motivational forces in people's struggles for independence and self-determination Religion thus plays an ambiguous role in the lives of the people While its potential for revolutionary change has been tapped by some, by others it has been utilized to legitimate injustice and the status quo The task lies before us to determine the liberating aspects of the religions and cultures on the one hand, and their alienating, domesticating features on the other It is a regrettable fact that in Asia, the birthplace of all world religions including Christianity, no serious, critical study of the Asian religio-cultural complex has yet been done

56 It is well known that liberation (*mukti*) has been a perennial quest of the world religions While emphasis has been on internal and spiritual liberation, their search also includes dimensions with social relevance· the stress on freedom from greed as well as from over-attachment to material or mental possessions and to one's private self Voluntary poverty, so central to Asian religious ideals, and the simplicity of life-style it implies, are powerful antidotes to capitalist consumerism and to the worship of mammon

57. Christian theology must be open to learn from other religions. In the Third World, theology must develop communion with the religions and cultures of the people Unfortunately the Christian evangelization of our part of the world was brought about by an aggressive Western culture which lessened our own appreciation of our indigenous cultures. For Christian life and theology to become relevant for us in the Third World, the Gospel of Jesus should be able to meet our peoples in an through our cultures To make this possible, the core of the Gospel must be disengaged from its Western wrappings and re-expressed in the cultural idiom of the poor and oppressed of our continents This work has already been initiated in Africa and Asia.

58 In our attempt to disengage our theology from its Western moorings and to relate it to the other religions, we should profit from the inadequacies of some Asian attempts in the past

The "fulfilment theology" (Christ is the fulfilment of all religions) was elaborated in the 1930s under Indian initiative to counteract the lông-held "civilization theology" of the Western missionaries and colonizers which taught a Christ-against-all-but-the-one-true-religion The fulfilment theology did not take into account the pervading poverty of Asia and failed to recognize Christ-of-the-poor while acknowledging the Christ-of-religions

The ashramic movement of the 1960s was a reaction to the "development theology" of the West Both recognized the poverty of Asia Development theology saw the cause as lack of economic growth; the ashramic movement discerned the enemy as greed The movement was unable however to move from the micro-ethical level to the macro-structural, because it failed to see the structural greed of systems and institutions Lacking the full perspective, the people of the ashramic movement remained in passive solidarity with Asia's poor and oppressed without actually participating in their struggle.

The most recent attempts to emphasize "inculturation" in opposition to Latin American "liberation theology" again have their shortcomings The Church and theology must indeed be inculturated, but the advocates of inculturation fail to see the class culture they have identified with Culture and religion are not monolithic in Asia There are many cultures within one religion, and many religions in one culture. Likewise there are different class positions in one religion.

59 People of other religions and beliefs also reveal some aspects of the will and message of God for our times As we Christians recognized God's action in the events of Jewish history, so must we learn to discern God's presence among the opperssed of other faiths as they struggle for full humanity in the Third World today. Their sacred scriptures and traditions are also a source of revelation for us. This consideration of divine relevation enables us to see that the concept of the "people of God" should be widened to include not only believers of other faiths but the whole of humanity — all of whom the God of the Bible wishes to bring to life and self-understanding.

60 We favour ongoing dialogue between Christians and the members of other religions But this dialogue cannot remain on an intellectual level about God, salvation, human fulfilment, or other concepts Beyond dialogue, there must be collaborative action for the integral liberation of the oppressed, not only action to change the unjust and oppressive social structures but also attempts to regain our lost identity and life-giving values Our common praxis with the people of other faiths is a valid source of theology in the Third World.

The God of Life and the Kingdom

61 Poverty and oppression in the Third World are not just a situation of deprivation, they bring unjust and untimely death to millions of women, men and children through hunger, disease and repression But death in the Third World is not only physical Countless people are degraded and have suffered the loss of their identity, dignity, and personhood Not only persons are killed, but also entire cultures and religious traditions have been annihilated either by colonialism or by the modern forms of repression. The poor and the oppressed are struggling not only for a better economic standard but for freedom and dignity, for life and full humanity They risk their life for the sake of life and undergo death to undo the powers of death

62 We find in the Third World a dialectical tension between life and death, manifested in different ways In Asia, despite the tendency to reconcile and harmonize opposites, this tension exists. In the African world-view, the cosmos is seen as a permanent struggle between life and death In Latin America, physical death of the victims of repression has become a source of life for the Christian community. This dialectical relationship challenges us to deepen the meaning of our faith in the God of life. Third World theology is thus led to a constitutive dimension of our biblical faith· through Jesus' death, God overcame death (2 Tim 1 10). God has overcome death in all its forms and shapes This is the source of our hope that life-giving forces will finally triumph To believe in this God of life is to believe in love, justice, peace, truth, and human wholeness It is to denounce the causes of the dehumanization of our people and to fight against the systems that diminish and extinguish the lives of so many

63 To proclaim a God who does not see the plight of the poor and does not act in their favour is to preach a God of death, a dead God. When the forces of death are free to kill, God's reality is not recognized. When life is ignored or cruelly crushed, false Gods are set up. This is idolatry (Ex 20: 2-6) In the Third World, the opposite of faith is not atheism but idolatry.

64. We cannot separate God from the Kingdom of God Jesus did not bear witness to himself but to the reality of God and the Kingdom. The Kingdom of God is the Kingdom of life. In inaugurating the Kingdom, Jesus performed signs of life. healing the sick, feeding the hungry, restoring the outcast and setting the down-trodden free (Lk 7:22). He came to give life and life in abundance (Jn 10: 10).

65. The Kingdom of life is revealed above all in the Resurrection of Jesus The Resurrection means that new life and new humanity is taking shape right within the struggle of the victims of injustice, even in their death This is the re-enactment of the Paschal mystery in the Third World (Rom 6: 5-11, 1 Pet 1: 3)

66 To be a follower of Jesus is to witness to his life, death and resurrection Discipleship calls for participation in the struggle of the oppressed for the transformation of social structures and the renewal of cultures At the same time it demands a conversion of ourselves and of our distorted relationships This is what it means to love one's neighbour, this is what it means to be a Christian in the Third World today (1 Jn 3 18)

67 A renewal of theology should bring about not only new articulations but a new spirituality coming out of the positive inspirations of our cultures and of our struggles Different regions have different emphasis in the expression of their spirituality Two examples. The report from Central America states that many Christians in that area are reliving the Exodus, the Covenant, and the Paschal Mystery and discovering the saving God in that experience The report from India makes an effort to link Christian spirituality with the different ways of experiencing the Divine in the Indian traditions the Cosmic, the Gnostic, and the Totalizing The report stresses the need to recapture the very Indian and positive dimension of all three and hold them in living unity, liberated from every kind of alienation and misuse.

68 At the daily worship during the conference, the continental groups showed a variety of ways to express their search for God and their own spirituality The worship service prepared by the women reflected the women's perspective in Christian prayer and in re-reading the Bible A few at the conference questioned the reinterpretation of the Biblical message in non-sexist terms, but at the end, it was generally acknowledged that this was an integral part of the women's attempt to express their reflections and spirituality arising from their specific struggle

69 The values of the Kingdom and new ways of spirituality are being lived and experienced in small Christian communities Though more widely known in Latin America, these communities are a sign of renewal and hope in many Third World countries Christians get together to pray, study the Bible, share their pain and joy, celebrate the Eucharist and strengthen their commitment to the people (Acts 2.42, 46, 47). In a growing number of these communities a new form of ecumenism based on common praxis and a new synthesis between faith and political action are developing.

70 When Christians in the Third World actively engage in changing structures and the mind-sets behind them, they face opposition and sometimes persecution. In many countries, the commitment of Christians has threatened the authorities who have made them a special target of their repressive activities, inaugurating a new era of persecution and martyrdom (Lk 21.12; Jn 15:20) As in the early

centuries, Christians are accused of being subverters of their societies and made to pay with their lives for the crime of supporting the people's struggles They are rejected and ostracized by some in their own worship communities for siding with the masses (Lk 21: 16-17)

71 The era of persecution is becoming a new era of the Spirit in the Christian communities of the Third World The words of Jesus about losing one's life, taking up the cross, and following his path have become a dramatic reality in many countries (Mt 10 38-39). But suffering and death do not have the final say (Jn 3 14, 16). We thank God that in our times, many Christians have joined the oppressed in their struggle for justice (Mt 5 10-11) We humbly ask God the grace of following the path traced by the blood of our martyrs

Conclusion and Orientations

72 The irruption of the poor and oppressed does not automatically lead to the victory of justice Besides direct acts of violence against them, divisions among the oppressed are manipulated to pit them against one another As Third World Christians and theologians, we wish to stand with our people in resisting the forces which try to divide, to weaken, and to destroy them We want to place our energies and theological resources at their service for the greater realization of justice and freedom in our world This is to participate actively in the liberating mission of Jesus (Lk 4 18-19)

73 After our days of work, prayer, and fellowship, we decided to recommit ourselves as an Association to continue our work towards a more relevant theology for the Third World for a period of another five years Among our program goals for this next five-year period, we saw as priorities·

— evolving a process of doing theology in and from the situation of struggle in our lands and helping to orient Christian and ministerial formation in this direction;

— developing a synthesis between the two major trends in Third World theologies. the socio-economic and the religio-cultural both of which are essential for integral liberation;

— supporting the women's struggle for equality in and through theology.

We agreed on three concrete ways of implementing our goals:

a) working commissions on the continental level,

b) international dialogues with special groups;

c) an intercontinental conference and assembly at the end of the next five-year period.

74. Our tasks, general and specific, include:

— preparing a dialogue with First World theologians on how the struggles of the oppressed lead to a better understanding of God in different contexts,

— forming continental working groups on (a) cultures/religions ıd their relation to integral liberation, and (b) Church history from e perspective of the oppressed,

— organizing a theological conference on Women to further their ɔeration efforts in the Churches and in society,

— initiating a program of interchange among Third World ıeologians through longer visits transcontinentally, the translation of ıeir works, and the publication of bibliographies,

— denouncing anti-justice evangelistic efforts that unfortunately ıvide Christians and prevent the development of a more relevant ıeology for our times,

— communicating the demands of justice by the oppressed to ıe Churches at the centres of power,

— cooperating with international agencies promoting the values f justice, freedom, equality, and peace, human and social rights, the ɛhabilitation of refugees, and the preservation of nature.

75 Coming to the end of our document, we wish to express our ratitude to God for the guidance and insights we have received Ve also thank all those in New Delhi and elsewhere who have made ıur coming together possible We want to share this document with ıur brothers and sisters who quest for a meaningful Christianity in ıur world and a full human life for all May the God of Life, the ource of our strength and our hope, be with us in our quest

Correspondence

Are the Concepts of Dharma and Religion Identical?

Dear Editor,

As a footnote to the two articles in VIDYAJYOTI, November 1981, by Fr A Van Exem on "Conversion" and Fr C Valles on "A Tale of Two Languages" may I add·

On my way to India in 1949, I discussed on boardship with three Hindu students returning to India the definition of religion Not one of them mentioned God, or what we Christians understand by religion Unfortunately we cannot undo the harm done by translating dharma by religion and by calling a change of religion conversion or *dharmanter* For the Jews the essence and culmination of their religion was the Law regulating the relations between God and men For the Hindus dharma is not easily summed up As it seems to me, one could call it the natural law, including physical and moral law, or as Zaehner puts it "the 'form' of things as they are and the power that keeps them as they are and not otherwise" (*Hinduism*, p 2f) A seven volume dictionary of Marathi gives four pages on "dharma", from which I quote ' 'The dharma of the cow is to give milk" "the dharma of the soil is to give off the scent of soil" (*Maharashtra Shabdkosh*, Vol IV, p 1726) If then dharma is translated by religion it sounds absurd But it should make us understand, how obnoxious for a Hindu conversion, change of religion (dharma), *dharmanter* is It does not make sense to them How can a cow change her nature (dharma, religion)? And how, consequently, can a Harijan deny his station in life conditioned by his karma and change his dharma (religion, nature)? Conversion so understood must infuriate some people and some lawgivers as something perverse, something against nature (dharma) It may even induce Christian Indologists to plead for a moratorium on conversions, they themselves are being conditioned by language, mixing up two concepts not identical on the level of social communications

It is quite true that further analysis of the concept of religion and dharma may be converging in the fulfilment of the Law in Christ as the final 'form' of the cosmos Zaehner maintains that 'dharma' and 'forma' and 'firmus' go back to the same root (ibid, p 2) Francis D'Sa writes about "Dharma as Delight in Cosmic Welfare" *Biblebhashyam*, December 1980, pp 335-356)

Facing anti-conversion agitation, this ecumencial enrichment of our thinking does not help much We use the English of theological writing, they have learned only the English of the bazaar 'Dharma' in the Indian languages comprises more than our limited notion of 'religion', hence misunderstandings, reinforced by history The curse of the Tower of Babel is very much with us

Bhakti Niwas,
Pathardi,
Dt Ahmednagar

H SIXT, S J.

Book Reviews

Sacred Scripture

Jesus and the Transformation of Judaism. By John RICHES *London, Darton Longman and Todd* 1980 Pp x-254 £ 12 95

Inspired by the enquiry made already by Reimarus (1964-1768) about Jesus' purpose, the author examines not only what Jesus said and did, but "what purpose Jesus himself had for himself" in his teaching and actions, as seen in the context of the development of contemporary Judaism In an introductory chapter he briefly examines the development of the problem from Reimarus to our days This historical survey of N T scholarship regarding the problem reveals *how* changes can occur in religious tradition Riches emphasizes that in a study of this kind there is need to make "an adequate analysis of how language changes within a given community, in such a way that interestingly new beliefs can be expressed in a language which can still be understood by those to whom it is addressed" (p 18) He cautions that "we shall have to be careful to avoid simplistically mechanistic models of causality in explaining the relationship between sociological factors and religious beliefs" (p 19) The next chapter exposes the author's own views about language, underlying his study He begins by examining the different ways in which theologians and social anthropologists, in their respective field "have dealt with questions of the nature of religious language, more particularly the change in religious language and the relation of religious beliefs and sociological factors Riches himself distinguishes between the words of a speaker and the meaning his words are meant to convey This will depend both on the conventional meaning of the words and the context in which they are uttered New ideas must be expressed either by using new terms or by introducing change in the conventional meaning of the words The author's study proceeds carefully, with minute details and nuances We are told about the distinction between the sense of what is said and the force of an utterance, the different reasons why it is said, etc The author hopes that what "the proposed analysis offers is a way of analysing the religious responses to different types of situation which does justice both to the interaction between the religious group and its particular circumstances, and also to the particular content and nature of that response" (p 43)

These principles are applied to a restricted field, viz, Jesus' transformation of first-century Judaism in response to the particular conditions of his time How did Jesus modify the conventional associations of certain key terms while rejecting others altogether ? How did his teaching constitute the basis of a response to Hellenism, very different from those of other contemporary groups ? The Pharisees and the Essenes of Qumran intensified norms, while the Zealots and the Baptist radicalized norms Jesus, however, emphasized God's love and forgiveness, thus transforming the traditions about God's Kingdom Jesus continued to see God's Kingdom as the establishment of God's rule but he rejected certain traditional associations of the notion He expressed his teaching of the Kingdom and penance by his ministering to the sick, the poor and oppressed, and associating with 'sinners' These activities and teaching are examined against the traditional background, showing the continuity but also pointing to significant discontinuity, more particularly the way Jesus spoke about the Law, cultic matters, purity and defilement, as well as about the nature and activity of God

The final chapter examines Jesus' role in the transformation of first-century Judaism, how his contemporaries saw him and the evidence we have of Jesus' own understanding of himself With regard to this last point it is important to consider not only those sayings in which Jesus refers to the Son of Man, but also those in which he refers directly to himself in various ways, such as 'I' sayings, 'disciple-sayings', calling men to follow after him, etc Riches thinks that it is possible to trace in Jesus' sayings "a coherent under-

standing of Jesus' prophetic role which draws on both the traditions of Malachi 3 and Deuteronomy 18 but reinterprets them in the light of Jesus' modified understanding of God's judgement and mercy which we also met in Jesus' modifications of the notion of the coming of the Son of Man" (p 184).

It is impossible to summarize adequately this dense, minutely detailed analysis of the subject The author's new approach to the Gospel material, limited here to the Synoptics, could produce interesting results if applied to the rest of the N T

J VOLCKAERT, S J

Religious Life

The Seed Must Die Religious Life — Survival or Extinction ? By Diarmuid Ó MURCHÚ, MSC *Dublin, Veritas Publications*, 1980 Pp 150 £ 3 50

Religious life is a historical reality, although biblically inspired Its many changes and adaptations are only ointments in treating a serious internal wound — the malaise of identity Only an awareness of the history of religious life can give us a clarity of vision for an authentic renewal This is the main thesis of this book The author is of the opinion that the history of religious life itself follows analogically the cyclic model of growth and decay of religious groups as proposed by Raymond Hostie In its various phases any historical renewal seems to originate within the decline of the former phase In this light, religious life in the 20th century is "on the downward curve", the "missionary phase" is fading into a radically new phase This new phase will be characterized by a strong sense of solidarity with the poor, of humanizing work, etc

Another factor that must give religious life a clarity of vision is an adequate theology of its own existence Such a theology should respond to the call to bear prophetic witness to human dignity, to solidarity with the poor, to the dignity of work and to protest against the compulsive irrational forces of consumerism and injustice

Through the vows the religious lifestyle becomes a "centre of value radiation" Celibacy is a prophetic dynamism radiating a new age already present, poverty is a prophetic stance in a world of commodities, a call to share the many gifts God has given us, obedience is listening attentively to the voice of God The Trinitarian model of community alone can inspire us to proclaim the values of fuller life A religious community is always in the making, pointing to the future

For anyone interested in acquiring a historical perspective of religious life, the present work will be of great value

JOE MATHIAS, S J

Religious Psychology

Happy Are You Who Affirm By Thomas A KANE *Whitinsville, Massachusetts, Affirmation Books*, 1980 Pp 183 $ 5 (Available from Asian Trading Corporation, 33A, Marine Lines, Post Box No 11029, Bombay 400020)

Happy Are You Who Affirm is a psychological approach to life It is an attempt to evangelize modern man's outlook and attitudes towards himself, towards others and towards the world at large Affirmation as a form of evangelization can take place only in the context of a relationship with God It is in this basic relationship with God that one comes to the realization of his own intrinsic goodness. And this self-realization in turn leads one to recognize and affirm the goodness in others

The author's contention, supported by his pastoral experience as a priest and counsellor is that many people, especially priests and religious (both men and women), because they are basically non-affirmed people lead a disintegrated life where work and task become the main thrust They approach life merely at the intellectual level, exhausting all their energies in doing things rather than being for others In the 5th chapter the author analyses some of the causes why people become non-affirmed Among those listed are early childhood experiences of non-affirmation, negative messages about emotions as bad, and an over-idealized image of the self On the contrary, trust, approval, recognition, appreciation, reconciliation, reverence and contemplation are, according to the author, essential ingredients that foster affirmation (chapter VI)

The concluding chapter is entitled "The Ministry of Affirmation Affirm Your Brothers and Sisters" It reproduces a talk given to the Union of Superiors General for Men, in which the author explains the story of the House of Affirmation founded by him This chapter beautifully summarizes what has been

said in the preceding nine chapters of the book Joe MATHIAS, S J

Sexuality

Sexual Dimensions of the Celibate Life. By William F KRAFT *Dublin, Gill and Macmillan*, 1979 Pp x-221 £ 4 95

Mr Kraft who is married with two children addresses himself as a psychologist to celibate sexuality taken in a wide sense He treats it not only in relation to vowed celibates but also to other single and to married persons In the first chapter, he makes celibates and the married speak about each others' state and to clarify each others' prejudices In a chapter on the Sexual Person, he discusses the complementarity of the sexes Man meets his hidden *anima* in woman, and woman her *animus* in man Sexuality is to be seen as an integral part of the person Neither should sexuality be repressed while promoting spirituality, nor spirituality be repressed while promoting sexuality Kraft stresses healthy sexuality as an integration of the sexual and the spiritual

He then goes on to discuss primary sexuality as male and female existence This primary sexuality has physical, functional, spiritual and aesthetic dimensions The basic challenge here to man and woman is to be wholly what they are In this connection the book offers an important discussion on genitality Genitality, as distinct from genital behaviour, is the articulation of the whole person But when one identifies oneself with genital sex and behaviour, one becomes less than what he is

Kraft has also a useful discussion on the defence mechanisms in relation to sexuality But he stresses the integration that concerns the whole person He discusses affective sexuality Men must beware of minimizing affective sexuality, women evaluate it differently In celibates affective sexuality can exist as an end itself, for their love too is existentially and primarily sexual There follow a treatment of celibate friendship in heterosexual relations and another enlightening chapter on celibate love The last chapter on sexual emergence traces the dynamics of the development of sexuality

The book is full of insights and practical wisdom and, though often repetitious, it helps towards a better understanding of sexuality in celibates of different kinds

S AROCKIASAMY, S J

Social Doctrine

The Gospel of Peace and Justice. Catholic Social Teaching since Pope John Presented by Joseph GREMILLION. *New York, Maryknoll, Orbis Books*, 1980. Pp xiv-623 $ 12 95

The social documents of the Church in recent years contain an impressive array of ideas that could provide a clear orientation for bringing about true human development and liberation. But it is not easy to consult these scattered documents Consequently, most people have a poor acquaintance with the rich insights contained in them So Gremillion has done a signal service to those interested in social change according to Christian principles, by providing the full text of as many as 22 documents since *Mater et Magistra* of John XXIII (May 15, 1961) to the Message of Paul VI on Reconciliation (January 1, 1975) There is also an extensive overview of the documents regarding some vital themes, as well as points for deeper theological reflection. The popularity of the work is proved by the fact that it has run into the fifth printing since it was first published in 1976

The cut-off year of 1961 is well chosen since *Mater et Magistra* initiates a perspective closer to the needs of the present time and adopts a more positive attitude towards secular currents and movements that have originated outside, and even in opposition to the Church But as most of the more recent social documents rely heavily on older ones, beginning with *Rerum Novarum* of Leo XIII (1891), a volume containing these documents would also be useful

It is to be hoped that this excellent collection of social documents of the Church will widely promote their close study and inspire many to put their content in practice Many a reader might be surprised to find rather radical statements in documents like *Populorum Progressio* and *Octogesima Adveniens*, and realize that the Church has a specific message regarding the transformation of human society

G LOBO, S J.

Islam and Christianity

We Believe in One God. The Experience of God in Christianity and Islam. Edited by Anne-Marie SCHIMMEL and Abdoldjavad FALATŪRI. *London, Burns*

and Oates, 1979 Pp 180. (No price given)

The spectacular political developments in various parts of the Muslim world over the past few years have made Islam an object of heightened general interest A deeper understanding of the political, the socio-economic and cultural transformations of Muslim life in all its variety would seem to us, however, difficult without taking account of the religious and theological dimension of Islam

Christians have been encouraged by repeated statements of their religious leaders and by frequent international, national and local conferences to develop a new attitude towards their Muslim neighbours and to try to grasp the distinctive as well as the common, or partly common, features of Christian and Muslim theology Since the formation of sizable Muslim minorities in various countries of ancient Christian tradition and since the rise of a new post-colonial self-confidence in many Muslim majority countries, Muslims, too, begin to feel the need for an appreciation of what the Christians of today actually believe, not only of what past Christian generations were held to believe as reported and summarized by the authors of the traditional Muslim manuals

Predictably, two characteristics will mark future theological work of Muslims about Christianity and of Christians about Islam It will be increasingly a work in dialogue or even shared work, and it will give much attention to the experiential side of religion Symbols, rites, credal formulas and laws will be seen as having grown out of foundational religious experiences and out of a basic religious vision which lives on in the later manifestations of a given religious tradition The present work marks a step precisely in this direction

The title of the book may raise the expectation of a systematic comparative inquiry into the experience of God in both traditions In fact, contributions like, for instance, H. Burkle's study of secularization as a theme in Christianity's dialogue with non-Christian religions, or Peter Antes' enquiry into what Islamic theology has to say about the relations Muslims should have to unbelievers, underline a certain lack of coherence and concentration in the planning of the symposium and of the volume presenting its papers. The Yugoslavian Muslim scholar Smail Balić warns us against expecting much for Christian-Muslim dialogue from centring our interest on the Jesus of Islamic theology. Muslims recognize Jesus neither as God nor as Son of God "Despite the respect, therefore, which Muslims show towards Jesus as a messenger sent by God, no practical results are likely to come from Muslim-Christian dialogue in regard to Christ" Hence Balić suggests categorically· "Only a return to the common source, belief in God, and common ethico-social and religious objectives can guarantee meaningful dialogue and productive cooperation" (pp 7-8)

The two papers by Falatūri and the one by R. Schwager deal with the core of the question posed by the volume. "How can a Muslim experience God", Falatūri asks, "given Islam's radical monotheism ?" In other words, since Islam (or, better, the Quran as normative source of Islam) states the absence of any kind of mediation (by man, nature, principle, and so on) between God and man, how is experience of God understood ? (p 78) ' Is the God of orthodox Islam so separated from man that the most man can hope for is an abstract, rational experience of him, provided, of course, that man has been thoroughly trained in philosophy ? Falatūri tries to solve this dilemma in a typical Shia vein by reflecting on the famous verse on Light in Sura 24 35. Here, he comments, the Quran asserts that God is the Light of heaven and earth (the cosmos), of all that exists outside himself, and that he guides to his Light whom he wills This kind of light symbolism, suggested by the Quran, is taken by Falatūri to express the typically Quranic conception of the God-cosmos and God-man relationship, different from any kind of pantheism as well as from any immanentism of a divine *phusis*

Looking at the God-man encounter from man's side, Falatūri would summarize the Quran's teaching as stressing "the soul, not the body of a man, the heart, not the ratio as the locus for the encounter with God, for an experience of God which can be described neither as rational nor empirical It is an experience of God *sui generis* It has nothing to do with mystical experience in the usual sense .." (p 83) For Falatūri the basic outlook of Muslim piety is the enactment of Islam as service grounded in the experience of God. "Service is the unfolding of that

which is imparted to man by his Creator, the unfolding of the authentic essence of existence that is the unfolding of the union of God which is hidden within him, the unfolding of Islam, of surrender to the one God, an unfolding which in all its phases is a fully valid experience of God" (ibid)

R Schwager's essay on the characteristics of the Christian concept of history — following Falatūri's reflections on the experience of time and history in Islam — demonstrates the utter novelty of a truly Christian outlook on history In the Christian's faith-experience of history Jesus the Christ, the Risen Lord, opens, as it were, a 'space' where each man can attain to that divine-human fulness which is man s heritage in him

R Gramlich's penetrating essay on the mystical dimensions of Islamic monotheism and A Schimmel's intricately woven carpet of mystico-poetical interpretations of the Quranic data on creation and judgment lead the reader into yet another, the mystical, dimension of the Islamic God experience

Not all contributions to the symposium seem to be equally relevant to the subject chosen Furthermore, one misses a couple of papers that would have set out to explore the possible meaning of the God experience of the other tradition for a deeper understanding of that within one's own — in the manner Kenneth Cragg has demonstrated so masterfully in some of his writings However, the volume as a whole certainly succeeds in opening up new vistas in the wide field of Christian-Muslim theological reflection and research

Christian W TROLL, S J

Mission

Hindustan-Tibet Mission. By Fulgentius VANNINI, O F M Cap *New Delhi, Vishal Printers*, 1981 Pp xiv-325 (No price given) (Available from Superior, St Patrick's Church, Sector 3, Rajendra Nagar, Sahibabad 201 005)

The history of Catholic efforts in N India, in the territory formerly covered by the Mughal empire, is partly well known, partly little known We owe to the late Fr Fulgentius a survey of that history, which is fairly comprehensive and detailed Due to the unfortunate death of the author in Italy in 1978, Fr Cyril Pisi, a former Capuchin missionary in N India, brought the work to completion

What was called once upon a time 'The Hindustan-Tibet Mission' began in 1703, the date when the first Capuchins arrived in N India on their way to Tibet It ends in 1845, when it was replaced by the vicariates apostolic of Agra and Patna In some cases the latter's history is given until about 1886

The ten chapters of the book lead us through enormous geographical distances, from Bettiah to Chandernagore, from Agra to Lucknow and Patna and to Sardhana with its eccentric Begum

In chapter eight all the stations which have been either founded or taken care of by the Capuchins are mentioned with a short account for each Thus we have a Gazeteer of Bhagalpur, Purnea, Monghyr, Chandernagore, Patna, Dinapore, Bankipore, Bettiah and Chuhari, Chunar, Ghazipur, Lucknow, Kanpur, Agra, Mathura, Sardhana, Delhi, Gwalior, Meerut, Karnal, Ambala, Mussoorie, Dehradun, and the Punjab. Educational institutions, including those founded by congregations of sisters, are also studied

With chapter nine we enter into the field of the literary, catechetical, biblical and devotional works written by leading Capuchins, such as J M Bernini, Marco della Tomba, and others The last chapter provides a historical and biographical survey of all the Capuchins, most of whom were Italians, who came to N India between 1748 and 1844

This book, as the previous ones by the same author, is by and large a history of Capuchin missionaries The communities they created, organized and looked after, are indeed present; yet the centre of interest is not on the people but on their pastors The prehistory of the vicariate of the Great Mughal — mostly the Mughal Mission of the Jesuits — could have been combined with the historical background of the Agra archepiscopal see

I would have expected to find a much better drawn bibliography Not even Clemente da Terzorio, O F M Cap, and his Italian history of the Capuchin missions, in which volumes VIII and IX deal entirely with India, is mentioned Also the lack of an index of persons and places is keenly felt For the work abounds in names, and the table of contents is so general that without an index the book is difficult to consult

E. R. HAMBYE, S.J.

Recent Church History

The Church Now: An Inquiry into the Present State of the Catholic Church in Britain and Ireland Edited by John CUMMING and Paul BURNS *Dublin, Gill and Macmillan,* 1980 Pp 235 £ 5 95

The nearly twenty years since the beginning of the Vatican II Council have been a time of reflection, change and updating Often painfully the Church almost everywhere tried to adapt herself to a world which was being reborn

This collection of twenty-one essays is a survey, fairly complete, of the Catholic Church as she finds herself today in the British Isles The various contributors are naturally influenced by the National Pastoral Congress, which gathered in Liverpool in 1980, attended by some 2,000 delegates Time and again the Congress insisted on the urgent need for the Church to come to grips with the 'secular city' and the problems it raises in both personal and social relations

Among the contributors seven are members of the clergy They include Bishop Alan Clark of East Anglia, the official spokesman in England on ecumenism, whose contribution to the volume is both balanced and filled with hope for the near future The lay writers are mostly university scholars

Almost all aspects of the Church in England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland are reviewed, including government, parish, religious life, education, marriage and family, social questions, theology, culture, worship, etc In the first five essays a general but fairly comprehensive assessment of the Catholic Church in the various countries is given Dr Michael P Hornsby-Smith, a leading statistician of Surrrey University, analyses in some details the current figures on Catholics in U K and Ireland

Nearly all the contributors are highly critical While aiming at being objective and impartial, they often tend to focus the attention on the negative side of the picture This is explained by their keen awareness that change is needed There in no denying the fact that till recently the Church in England and Ireland was known as very conservative The symposium shows that the mood is changing The intelligentsia in the Church, especially in England, aspire at a post-Conciliar Church with a more dynamic, more open and above all more adapted outlook.

Perhaps also the hopes raised by the Liverpool Congress have not been fulfilled quickly enough It is known that a small number of bishops have shown themselves reluctant, if not opposed, to falling in line with its spirit and recommendations This explains the sense of frustration which is frequently reflected in the essays Similar surveys could, of course, be written in other countries where the Church is still lagging behind the times

E R HAMBYE, S J

A History of African Christianity 1950-1975. By Adrian HASTINGS *Cambridge University Press,* 1979 Pp xi-336 £ 15 (hard cover), £ 4 95 (paperback)

Twenty-five years appear as a rather short span of time yet within such a span the whole of sub-Sahara Africa became decolonized, except for Namibia (South-West Africa) which still awaits to be freed

A Hastings was well prepared to write on Christianity in Africa having himself spent many years of Christian ministry in East Africa Hence his treatment of the subject bears the stamp of personal experience It is also quite dense, because he aims at being as complete as possible

His plan is clear He divides the work into five parts The first four show the development in four periods· the state of affairs in 1950, 1951-58, the beginnings of decolonization, 1959-65, its climax, 1967-75, its first fruits and its varied results

Each of those four parts has the same threefold division Church and State, the Historic Churches, i e, the great Christian branches, such as the Ethiopian Orthodox, the Greek Orthodox, the Catholic, the Anglican, the Presbyterian, the Lutheran, etc, Independency, i e, the rise, spread and in some cases the fall of the new Christian bodies of African origin

The fifth part is entitled "Between Politics and Prayer" It is a critical analysis of the main characteristics of the various Churches as they have developed during a quarter of a century, with their problems and the solutions they have devised, their social and structural situations

The description, often vivid and colourful, of the 'independent' African

Churches is likely to arrest the reader's attention They often call themselves 'Ethiopian', though they have nothing to do with the Ethiopian Orthodox In all cases but one, those communities arose from an Anglican and Protestant background

The author is definitely anti-colonialist and strongly favours local Churches Amidst a wealth of facts, portraits of personalities, and sometimes the analysis of ludicrous situations, he succeeds to keep the main thread clear and his style is often incisive

He shows remarkably well how the historic Churches, including the Catholic, were prompt to africanize He explains in some datails the reasons why by and large village communities and their chatechists have been, and most likely will remain for many years, the real cells of Christianity in Africa

A challenge for the Churches in Central and East Africa is the fact that among foreign missionaries only the American Baptists have increased in numbers This means that this well-known branch of Protestantism is making a new effort to obtain adherents From the ecumenical viewpoint this may not be a hopeful sign, for American Baptists, especially those of the Southern communities, are known to have little disposition towards the Christian unity movement Yet, the movement has grown rapidly in Africa South of the Sahara, and the influence of the World Council of Churches has become more and more felt in recent years

E R HAMBYE, S J

Stigmata

The Marks of the Cross. The Story of Ethel Chapman and the Stigmata By Ted HARRISON *London, Darton Longman and Todd,* 1981 Pp 86 £ 2 25

Ethel Chapman, who died in 1980, seems to have been the first Anglican with a verifiable experience of the stigmata Her case is studied here by an investigative journalist who for many years worked for BBC current affairs programmes His interest in the stigmatist was aroused by the preparation of a feature for the BBC Harrison employs "the normal journalistic standards of objective investigation" (p 27) Ethel seemed to have had a "dream or vision" in 1974 in which she felt the pain of nails through her hands and feet. Next she noticed the marks of stigmata. This strange phenomenon seemed to have recurred every Easter Her wounds, she claimed, bled as a form of premonition, usually of death in the family, sometimes along with a vision of the person who was dying

The author analyses her experiences in the light of the experiences of other stigmatists, starting from St Paul (Gal 6 17) down to Padre Pio of the present century The first two chapters give a survey of their experiences, categorized into about twelve headings In the latter chapters the author looks at the theological and psychological aspects of Ethel Chapman's case, quoting widely from psychologists like Dr Colin Powell, Dr Jack Dominian, David Lockyer, Dr Alfred Lechler — who *successfully induced the stigmata in* the hands and feet of a Lutheran peasant girl from Austria — and from theologians like C C Martindale, S J, and the Franciscan scholar, Fr Jarlath

The author seems to conclude that Ethel should be considered a genuine stigmatist though he reports the ultimate criteria given by Fr Jarlath "Stigmata is no sign of sanctify One would have to look into the circumstances sorrounding the occurence of this experience" (p 73) To sum up, the author has narrated a good story but he has failed to prove the genuineness of the experience

Joe MATHIAS, S J.

Bhagavad Gita

The Bhagavad Gita. By Rev Br Martin P JOSEPH *Mapusa, Goa, St Anthony's Institute,* 1978 Pp xx-171. Rs 15

The bulk of this book is yet another translation of the immortal classic of Hinduism, with many footnotes mostly giving more or less appropriate parallel passages from the Bible The translation is preceded by 40 pages wherein the author defends the old and discarded thesis of an influence on the bhakti cult and on the Gita from early Christian settlements in India In a preface Prof S S Walimbe, of Goa, rejects the thesis of this somewhat simplistic book — rightfully, it seems to me. G. G -S.

See also p. 80.

Cum permissu superiorum

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JOURNAL OF THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Theology of the Third World

"Jesus and Freedom"

Man the Worker

Caste Mentality

MARCH 1982

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In This Issue

In our last issue we have introduced our readers to the Delhi meeting of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians by publishing, along with the Final Statement of the Conference, an important paper on the hermeneutics of liberation theology We return here to the same meeting which, as we said earlier, represents a land-mark in the history of the young association Fr Samuel RAYAN shares with us his impressions of EATWOT V, he unfolds for us its genesis, explains its dynamics and describes its development He does in fact much more Under his pen the whole history of EATWOT comes to life and the driving force behind the movement is revealed to us With compelling power the author spells out what it means to do theology from the side of the oppressed people of the Third World

It cannot be denied that Church authority has a right and a duty to enlighten the faith of believers and, if need be, to guard it against possible error. Which authority should intervene in concrete cases is, however, already a matter of dispute The principle of subsidiarity would suggest that in normal circumstances the matter be handled by the local authority, the theology of the local Church further recommends the same The teaching authority should, moreover, intervene only as a last resort Censorship is odious In most cases it is also counter-productive What is required is not censure from above, imposed with authority derived from office, but open and frank criticism among peers — be they exegetes or theologians — based on professional competence Such dialogue, conducted in a spirit of common search and fraternal correction, will achieve more than imposition from above It is in this spirit that we publish a critique of *Jesus and Freedom*, by Fr J KOTTUKAPALLY The critic does not hide his genuine appreciation of much that is valuable in the author's approach to Jesus He nevertheless raises questions which bear on the core of Christian faith; these concern us all

In the Documentation Section Fr G LOBO comments on Pope John Paul II's recent Encyclical Letter on Human Labour.

The Irruption of the Third World— A Challenge to Theology

Samuel RAYAN, S J

I. *EATWOT*

THAT was the theme of the Fifth International Conference of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT). The Conference was held in New Delhi on August 17-29, 1981 There were fifty participants They came in almost equal strength from the three Third World continents, Africa, Asia and Latin America There were also delegates from the Caribbean and from the USA of Black and Hispanic minority groups In all 27 different countries were represented

Four conferences had preceded the Delhi meeting For the first time Third World theologians came together in Dar-es-Salaam in August 1976 Twenty two persons were present, eleven were Roman Catholic, ten Protestant and one Coptic Orthodox From the very start, then, the movement was ecumenical in every sense of the word What led up to this meeting, I shall narrate in a minute The main point to note now is that it was in the Dar Conference that the EATWOT came into being It was there that Third World Theology began to articulate its method and its project distinctly and loudly enough to be heard Here is how an African participant recalls the event

> One day in August 1976 in Dar-es-Salaam, in the land of the lofty Kilimanjaro which for countless ages stretches endlessly to the sea, the world's paralytics got up and stood erect, and the world's mutes spoke out A divine breath blew upon the bones of the "damned of the earth", those long-suffering people still capable of smiling in this gloomy world, a people intimately familiar with the impossible yet spurred on by an inchoate, crucified but invincible hope At this fraternal meeting of different denominations and races, the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians came into existence It bore within it the potentiality to realize the great expectations of distant lands and far away people who are looking for the centre of gravity of human history to shift and the face of the earth to be renewed [1]

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1 O K BIMWENYI, "The Origins of EATWOT", in *Voices from the Third World*, vol 4, n 2 (December 1981), p 19-20 Translated from *Bulletin de théologie Africaine*, II, n 3 (January-June 1980)

M. D. Chenu, the renowned French theologian, called the Conference of Dar 'the Bandung of Theology', recalling the historic meeting of the Non-Aligned Nations at Bandung, Indonesia, 1955.[2]

In Dar it was decided to hold four more meetings· three of them continental, each focussing on the reality of one of the continents concerned, and the last, intercontinental Accordingly in December 1977 some sixty-eight African theologians together with over thirty of their colleagues from other continents convened in Accra, Ghana, to discuss the prospects and tasks of African Theology This was followed by a meet in Wennapuwa, Sri Lanka, in January 1979, with seventy-three Asians and eight fraternal delegates from other continents who sought to spell out the specific character of Asian theology and describe what they called its Asian sense At the fourth EATWOT Conference in Sao Paolo, Brazil, in February-March, 1980, where some hundred and eighty Christians from forty-two countries participated, attention was centred on the reality of Latin America and in particular on the significance of Base-level Christian Communities

Last year, then, we met in New Delhi with the explicit intention of pooling our findings, listening to our critics, clarifying our position, synthesizing our insights and planning for further explorations and deeper probing When we met, EATWOT had already a history of five years rich in research and debate It had made some contribution to the contextualising of theology It had sought to spell out the specifics of Third World theology in general and the particularities of theology on each continent Four books had been published, one on each of the Conferences, containing the main presentations, the leading concerns, the significant conclusions as well as critical reflections by participants and others[3] The final statements of these conferences have had a world-wide distribution Besides, these last four years, EATWOT has been bringing out a semi-annual Bulletin, titled Voices from the Third World In preparation for the New Delhi Conference EATWOT people held two (or more) seminars in about four Regions on each continent The idea was that each group study their regional and continental situation, take note of questions

2 Sergio TORRES, "History of the Contribution of EATWOT to Theology". Paper read at the New Delhi Conference

3 EATWOT books

Sergio TORRES and Virginia FABELLA (eds), *The Emergent Gospel* (=*EG*), Maryknoll, N Y Orbis Books, 1977,

Sergio TORRES and Kofi APPIAH-KUBI (eds), *African Theology en Route*(=*ATR*), Maryknoll, N Y Orbis Books, 1978,

Virginia FABELLA (ed.), *Asia's Struggle for Full Humanity* (=*FH*), Maryknoll, N Y · Orbis Books, 1980,

Sergio TORRES and John EAGLESON (eds), *The Challenge of Basic Christian Communities* (*BCC*), Maryknoll, N Y.. Orbis Books, 1981.

it put to theology and theology put to it. It was these groups that sent their delegates to New Delhi. Similarly before the Sao Paolo meeting, Latin American theologians of EATWOT had three consultations. on "Race, Class and Liberation Theology", at Mandaville, Jamaica, on "Women, Praxis and Liberation Theology" at Tepeyac, Mexico; and on "Indigenous Mobilization and the Theology of Liberation" at San Cristobal de las Casas, Mexico The historical meeting at Dar was also preceded by consultations the story of which must be told before we go on to the dynamics of the New Delhi Conference.

II. *Its Birth*

The quiet genesis of EATWOT is to be traced to a moment in 1974 when Africa and Asia (India, to be precise) met In December that year Oscar K Bimwenyi, an African youth from Kinshasa, then studying in Louvain, and now Secretary General of the National Conference of Bishops of Zaire, arrived in India at the invitation of the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary to participate as African expert in their General Assembly at Dindigul, South India Travelling in India he was struck by the close similarities he saw between the social, political, economic and religious situation here and at home in Africa the dark-skinned people, the poverty, the prayers, the preoccupation with God's Word spoken through ancestor-prophets. Amid the questions springing from this experience, in this context at once familiar and strange, in this closeness to the earth and to people, an idea began to form in his mind and impose itself with pressing urgency The need of some structure for dialogue between theologians of the the Third World became an obsession with me, says Bimwenyi In the world of politics and socio-economic concerns organisations existed to foster understanding between under-developed countries and to work together for the creation of a better world Nothing comparable existed in the sphere of theology The sufferings and struggleness of the oppressed, the joys and sorrows of mortals which they take to God in prayer, are a source of theology, and the religious dimension is basic to every endeavour to liberate the wretched of the earth On his return to Louvain Bimwenyi shared his vision with François Houtart and later with the Latin American Enrique Dussel and two Indian priests. Their response was positive Circulars went and people were contacted on the three continents The correspondence that ensued showed how necessary and opportune the project was [4]

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4 O K BOMWENYI, "Une Anecdote Fondamentale Origine de l'EATWOT", Allocution d'ouverture de la table ronde des théologiens Africains, Région Francophone, Kinshasa, 18 December 1980 (Mimeographed paper).

Sergio Torres continues the story. "At the same time a group of Latin American theologians expressed a similar desire to meet with other theologians of the Third World" At the end of the Detroit (USA, 1975) Conference on Theology in the Americas "the Latin Americans reiterated special interest in the dialogue with Africans and Asians and decided to support the project initiated in Louvain They designated me to represent them in a meeting with the committee in Louvain."[5] At the meeting in Louvain, October-November 1975, Torres insisted that the projected conference should be ecumenical and not only Catholic. In December that year representatives of the three continents met in Nairobi on the occasion of the Fifth Assembly of the World Council of Churches and finalised plans for the Dar-es-Salaam Conference In New Delhi the complete story was recalled and acknowledged We are glad that what Bimwenyi calls the foundational, or even the founding, experience occurred in India

III. *A Touch of India*

The New Delhi Conference was lived in four distinct stages. After introductions and orientations, three days were given to exposing the delegates to the reality of India by means of visits and interpretations. Then came two days of continental sessions. At the third stage three presentations of global realities were made The delegates responded to these critically and sought to discern the implications of all they had seen and heard for relevant theology today The last stage was devoted to wrap-up work and to the shaping of a final statement In addition to the daily worship we had a joyful Eucharistic celebration in Latin worship style with dance, offering of flowers and *arati* A prayer service organised by women participants was particularly devotional and theologically challenging

On the first day the delegates went in small batches to villages within 30 kilometres of New Delhi, and the next day to different parts of the city They found their own conveyance, and an interpreter accompanied each group The idea was that they should get a taste of the local reality: travel by bus or by auto-rickshaw, the feel of market and shopping centre, the sight and scent of worship places of different religions, city slums, historical monuments, Government offices, the mansions of the rich, and the contrast between the beauty and the ugliness, the wealth and the poverty in this land of ours In the evenings we met to share experiences and reflections, D S. Swamy of the Delhi University being present to assist us to deepen our interpretations and gather loose ends together. A random

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5 Sergio TORRES, in *EG*, pp 1-2

sampling of what was shared may help guess the tone and quality of the conference when it began.

A Brazilian saw the villages as living an integrated and intensely collective form of life which contrasted with the distinct individualism *of life in his native land, which differed even from the collaboration found in the slums of his country*

An African said In Kenya Indians control the economy and form an exclusive, exploitative community Here for the first time I saw Indians who are human Another African said *Tell us how Indians in Kenya too could become human*

Latin Americans were taken up with the togetherness of children, the proximity of people, crowds packed together as happens only in buses in Mexico, the human energy, the presence of the cow everywhere, the positive economy of a poor school with a single teacher and children seated on the earth with a piece of slate for writing material They were surprised to see little or no sports activity, and little or no common land Is land tenure totally private ?

Some wanted a discussion on caste They had noticed that the Brahmin sector of the village was more developed 'Remove Untouchability' was seen written across a wall Is it true that converts to Christianity come from the lowest castes, and what you have here is a proletarian Church ?

A delegate from South East Asia Our interlocutor was the village chief all the time Does that say something about the village, its hierarchical ordering, its culture of silence ? The whole trip, the bus stations, the roads — all recall the simplicity and poverty of my land Is it really possible to change ? How massive the task of liberation in a population like this ! How massive the socialist task !

A South Indian went with others to the *panchayat* president's house The president said This is a model village, I do this and this for these people There are no problems here, no poverty, no caste discrimination Yet it was disclosed that forty families were landless, and many peasants could not afford two meals a day No Harijan men were at home, they were out and away at work. The president was from the upper caste majority The school had collapsed and nothing had been done about it People had earnings, but no sensitivity for collective needs. Were not Government resources available ? No reply There was to be a woman health officer in the village, but she rarely appeared

From West Africa: I came to learn of the way of life of the Indian people, not to solve their problems nor to make comparisons. People do not mention their sorrows to strangers. Our brothers from India could tell us how to change the image of Indians in East Africa. It is a devastatingly negative image.

A Korean. *In the village we listened to the chief according to whom there was no problem there Perhaps the peace and the harmony are superficial Perhaps there is much hidden conflict. The people were silent, they are poor and do not know why they are* reduced to this condition.

Somebody whose name is missing in my note book I have several questions and some comments How poor were these villagers ? How typical was the village itself ? When we came to a small factory the workers stopped work and came to serve us ? Why did they do this ? Hospitality ? Spontaneous or pre-arranged ? An aspect of caste ? Oppression ? I noticed a difference in perspective between what the chief said and what could be gathered from the people. We had little opportunity to talk to the people themselves On arrival we were met by men only What is the role of women ? I learned they had three roles to fill cook food, bear children, serve the men There seems to be rigid separation between men and women Men are gods to women ? and women are goddesses ? .

Sensitive listening to such accounts and questions will enable one to register a fairly accurate picture of rural India, with its patterns of land tenure, feudal relationships, caste and class oppression, as well as the ingenuity of the poor, the remnants of their ancient community organisation, and the silent hope cum despair in which they now live

The next day the sharing after the visit to the city was done group-wise One group recalled the poverty of the people, their silence, the pervasive sense of helplessness existing, paradoxically, in an atmosphere charged to all appearance with discontent and dissent emphasised by revolutionary posters announcing protest marches, strikes and radical slogans One of the delegates thought that India was far more in a state of revolutionary ferment than anything in Latin America. And yet why was nothing happening ? Some felt shame and sorrow; some sought for the structural causes of this situation Need of change was obvious, change was urgent. Meanwhile how was one to deal with individual cases when children and women and men came begging ? What was the role and relevance of religion in the context of extreme poverty ? What was the role of Christianity which believes that Christ has conquered death ?

One group said: We saw the Red Fort, the Anglican Church at a little distance, and we saw the caste system at work. We saw these as three dominations, how do Indian Christians see them ? We saw Sikh and Hindu temples, and the Roman Catholic cathedral The presence of religion in this place is strong The crowds and their devotion in the Sikh temple and a certain concern this religion shows for equality and human needs are striking Does religion contribute to poverty ? In the Sikh temple they drink dirty water and clean the floor regularly The Gurudwara serves 1500 meals a day to the hungry Much money is offered in religious places How is it used ? Are the modernised temples attempting a different interpretation of religion from what is traditional ?

Much that we saw near the New Delhi Railway station looked dilapidated, decaying, depressing I could not take my mind off the contrast that exists between Qutab Road and Parliament Street The Qutab Minar commemorates a Muslim interlude How did that interact with Hindu culture ? Who is remembered today. the artists and workers who created the Minar or the ruler of the time ? What significance has all this for Christian understanding of history ? The workers building the magnificent Nehru Place live in shanties and receive minimum wages. I guess all their life they will live in shanties, have little to eat and build mansions for others We waited for the bus to come, but lost patience and took an auto-rickshaw, unlike the people Some delegates were astonished that no epidemic was sweeping the region, seeing that foods and fruits were all kept open to wind and dust and fly and smoke from the city and the slums In trying to survive the poor were enterprising, so were the rich in striving to grow richer People performed circus and *yoga* on the road Gadgets filled the shops which their owners almost persuaded us to buy

We retired with a host of questions whirling in our minds What is the relationship between religion and poverty ? or between religion and liberation, for that matter ? Some of the delegates confessed their pre-conception, current among the learned in Europe and America, that India's poverty was due in large measure to the Indians' religions How is poverty related to caste, to colonial and neo-colonial exploitation, to the land question ? What are the inter-relationships among all these factors, and what forces are at work since the country's liberation which press for social transformation or try to block all substantial change ? Do the cultures and religions' of India hold out promises for the future ? How do Christian see their role in the great effort towards the removal of poverty, the revolution of culture and the rebuilding of the social order ? Was that grist for our theological mill ?

On the third day we had a different kind of exposure. We listened to and discussed with a panel of five speakers who handled some of our questions from the point of view of the religions or ideologies they were affiliated to Wazir Singh of the Punjabi University spoke from the Sikh perspective, and Musurul Haq of Delhi University from the Islamic Suman Khanna's approach, in interpreting her work with students, was Gandhian Bhagwan Das, spokesman for Scheduled Caste Buddhists and leader of Samata Seva Dal or Volunteers for Equality, described a non-violent road out of the present malaise into a just and human future He asked why, while so much was written about persecuted Jews and Blacks, next to nothing was said about the largest persecuted group of human beings, and 120 and more million Dalits (Oppressed) of India They were conquered and enslaved long ago Their history is the history of a never-ending Holocaust stretched over centuries. Today they seek freedom and equality through religion which is something that keeps people together and lifts them up, giving them ideals and direction Ambedkar chose Buddhism for his followers because of its Indian origin and its long record of freedom and compassion

Bapu Rao Pakhiddey, grass roots activist in the Dalit Panther movement, challenged all these presentations by insisting that change must be rapid and radical, and no change would ever come except through strong action from below by the oppressed themselves He described the discrimination, harrassment and atrocities practised on the Dalits, the oppressed, untouchable millions of this land. It is in their defence that the Dalit Panther movement sprang into being. The Dalits will no longer suffer without protest Militancy is a necessity Confrontation is unavoidable We are inferior to nobody. We bow to no superior beings America won freedom, but not for the Blacks India became independent, but not the people The Dalits in particular are slaves still But you cannot fool us any more. You cannot fool all of us all the time Today Dalit power is a fact to reckon with

The discussion which followed threw up important questions concerning religious pluralism, the unity of India despite the many castes and faiths, the efficacy of non-violence, the wisdom of partial struggles vis-à-vis the united struggle of all the oppressed, the political vision of Islam, and the source from which Dalits drew inspiration. It may be noted it was at this point we began to feel the absence of the poor in our gathering Why were we, academicians, listening to other academicians speaking on poverty and its removal rather than to the poor and the oppressed themselves ?

IV. *Continental Realities*

At the second stage the local experience so far gained was channelled into the larger experience of continental realities with which the delegates had come The several regional reports from each Third World continent was compared and combined to project a single general picture of the human situation on that continent This was then shared in plenary session and similarities and differences taken note of. Common to all were colonial experience and its dire consequences such as military, economic and political domination; the near total dislocation of life, the break-down of people's cultural identity, the decay of their creativity, the disruption of their social organisation as well as the massive exploitation of land and labour. Most of this still continues, often in quite sophisticated fashion, through the Multinationals no less than through aid mechanisms The result of it all is the unbalanced development of our countries, creating deep divisions and severe conflicts The process has thrown up a small europeanised elite which knows the way to wealth and power side by side with illiterate masses There are islands of wealth and affluence in a sea of poverty and misery Urban centres keep growing and absorbing all amenities of life at the expense of rural areas and their vast population which become increasingly impoverished The economic domination of our nations by world capitalism is not unrelated to the increasing militarisation of these countries, to the mounting repression by the local ruling class, to the rocketing tourism with its corrosive effect upon our culture and our way of life, and to growing prostitution which adds to the age-old oppression of women among us In a surprisingly large number of Third World countries bourgeois democracy has given way to totalitarian, military, repressive regimes sustained by the 'free world' like the United States The system could not keep up its pretences before the compulsions of an economy tied to old colonial trucks and meant for the benefit of the few, but mistaken by the masses as meant for all

Common to all the continents is also the general awakening among the people, the awareness of human dignity and rights The poor are everywhere beginning to organise themselves and resist oppression The struggle for life and freedom is gathering strength, and the search is spreading on our continents for our cultural roots and spiritual identity. Equally common is the distrust of capitalism, and the suspicion that socialism has some of the answers we need, a desire to dialogue with Marxism, a concern for people's religiosity and a care to distinguish between the people on the one hand and their ruling classes and Governments on the other.

There are differences too among the five geographical areas represented in the Conference, and divergences within each area. Here we need to mention only a few outstanding instances Asia's focus is on its marked religious pluralism and on its rich and ancient spiritual traditions Africa however concentrates on anthropology and culture, and Latin America on the oppressed condition of its people and their poverty. To US Blacks the problem is racism which they refuse to reduce to a phenomenon of socio-economic class. They feel that their situation is colonial, a feeling they share with the Caribbean The differences are often a question of varying emphasis rather than of exclusive positions The common as well as the different are of import to all of us

V. *Global Perspectives*

Before entering the third stage of the Conference the Delegates renewed their contact with the local reality by devoting an entire Sunday to meeting people, to worshipping with them, to preaching in various churches of the city and to tasting Indian hospitality. Then followed three presentations on three consecutive days, designed to lead our local and continental awareness forward into the expanses of global realities socio-economic first under Ajit Roy's (India) leadership; religio-cultural with Aloysius Pieris' (Sri Lanka) aid; and finally Biblical, Severino Croatto (Argentina) guiding

Ajit Roy dealt with the threat of nuclear holocaust, with the dynamics of world poverty, with North-South dialogue together with the Brandt Commission Report, with the crisis of capitalist world economy and with the deficiencies and prospects of "actually existing socialism" Roy showed how most of these factors are dialectically inter-related. The arms race and promotion of armed conflict, for instance, are a need of the present stage of capitalist development when giant companies' huge investments for huge profits need other giants or governments as customers Roy writes:

> While the danger of total annihilation as a result of a nuclear holocaust is still somewhat problematic, slow death from hunger and malnutrition, mass mortality from epidemics and other preventable diseases and a degraded sub-human existence for millions of population in the underdeveloped Third World is an *immediate reality.*
>
> The massive poverty of the Third World is rooted in the politico-economic structure, jointly created and dominated by the metropolitan capitalist countries and their collaborators in the Third World The process of eradication of this colossal poverty cannot be really initiated, a genuinely new international economic order cannot be introduced, without the overthrow of this neo-colonial set-up.

We of the Third World who are perturbed by the degradation of humanity in our part of the world have to understand our own problems in relation to the global problems of *war, poverty* or *maldistribution* arising from *property relations*, and to problems of *technology and culture*, also based on *social divisions* We can advance towards the solution of our pressing problems only in solidarity with world forces — through our involvement in common struggles

All these struggles are directly related with the struggles for the improvement of the quality of the "actually existing socialism"

Aloysius Pieris' talk was an incisice analysis of religion and culture He opened up challenging perspectives on theology for the Third World Sharply critical of the colonial Christ and of colonial projects of civilization theology, development theology and liberation theology which came from European sources, and equally critical of corresponding creations in India (Asia) of a fulfilment theology, an *Ashram* movement and an inculturation programme, Pieris observed that non-Christian Scripture-religions have all of them consistently rejected Christianity Fulfilment theology was abstract and did not see the reality of the poor It paid attention to the Christ of religions and not to the Christ of the poor Development theology started by elaborating the thesis that non-Christian religions were incapable of eradicating poverty It sought to remove poverty on the basis of modernisation imported from the West The corresponding *Ashram* movement advocated voluntary poverty as an antidote to socially imposed poverty But it did not know how greed was organised on a global scale It therefore fought Mammon at the micro-ethical-psychological level, and not at the macro-ethical-social level. Thus monasteries could not take part in the struggle of the poor They lacked perspective on poverty, they lacked analysis of who religion's real enemy was.

Pieris then traced the beginnings of the theology of liberation and dialogue with Marxism beyond Latin America's claims to Sri Lanka, to Samarajeeva, and to 1958 A lay group, mainly Protestant, spelt out liberation praxis in terms of Marxism, Buddhism and Christianity Let us hope that this story of origins will some day be told in full, as the genesis of EATWOT has been narrated by Bimwenyi Liberation theologies fail to critique the europeanising stance of Marx and Lenin who called for the destruction of the cultures of Asia as these were in their eyes obstacles to its liberation Marx and Lenin have been proven wrong Traditional societies of Africa have become socialist with controlled technology without going through europeanisation Liberation theology's counterpart in India (Asia), namely, Inculturation fails to see that every Church is in fact inculturated The real question is, in what class ? Too many Western theologians are interested in inculturation to prevent liberation. Pieris concluded

by emphasising the fact that the irruption of the poor is the irruption of the non-Christian poor, who are the majority. Christian theology must critically enter into this stream as Jesus entered the Jordan

Croatto's paper purposes to examine the objection that the re-reading of the Bible done in liberation (and Third World) theologies is subjective[6] Beginning with a study of Language as Event and as Scripture, Croatto proceeds to show how Reading is Production of Meaning. Behind the text of the Bible stands an event, a series of events, a whole history, and the growing, changing experience of the people whose history it is.

> Before being "Word of God" the Bible was *event* of God The saving experience is interpreted in an account that brings out the presence of God The account is not a film of the event, but an exploration into its meaning as message

The message of a text is to be found in its totality as a structure The Bible must therefore be read as one single text. Its unity is not the sum total of many literary units, but "their fusion into one central kerygma". The early Church re-read the Old Testament as one complete text, with the Paschal Mystery as a unique hermeneutical key The Bible's origin is in the genesis of a people in a process of liberation The people's conception of Yahweh and faith in Yahweh are bound up with and emerge from this experience of liberation The God of liberation, then, and the salvation God brings is the kerygmatic axis of the Bible Therefore

> The Bible offers an advantage for being read from the point of view of the oppressed or of liberation it is that its starting point is marked by deep *experiences of liberation in which the Israelite faith recognizes the saving God* as liberator . If the tradition of Israel continued on the same theme through so many centuries it was because the people experienced many events of oppression/liberation Now, who but the oppressed people of today, specially in the Third World, is most attuned to the kerygmatic nucleus of the Bible?
>
> Without in any way idealising the people . , it is no exaggeration to say that the poor and oppressed have the most rightful "ownership" of the Bible and are in the most adequate context to re-read it The message belongs to them more than to others. . They more than any other people live in a context in which the Biblical kerygma touches them profoundly and challenges them

Because the Bible is a text produced in hermeneutical correlation with the socio-historical praxis of a whole nation, it is "dripping with politics" "The Bible is the Word of God for a people seeking to fulfil its *historical* project of peace, justice, faithfulness, love, welfare

6 The paper has been published in abridged form in VIDYAJYOTI, February 1982, pp 54-69, under the title "Biblical Hermeneutics in the Theology of the Oppressed".

and freedom" God is present in the historical events of today too in which liberation is in process It is ours to discern it in faith.

> The Gospels stress the liberating and prophetic actions of Jesus, his death as suffering servant and persecuted prophet, his resurrection as the triumph of life The Christ event expresses again — in a new hermeneutical key — the salvific message of the Old Testament wherein the liberation of the poor and oppressed is the central theme

When, therefore, liberation theology "re-reads the exodus in the light of Christ along the central kerygmatic 'axis', its re-reading is done from the stand-point of the oppressed and of structures of dependence, and always takes the Bible as *one* text Such a re-reading leads up to the foundational event"

After some exchange on the matter presented we went into working groups to explore the theological implications of each topic

VI. *Challenge to Theology*

The work of the last two days was to deepen our reflection, bring the conclusions into focus and articulate a final statement Some of the findings may be sampled here

1. *Methodology*

It was always one of our basic concerns It has been our pre-occupation from Dar-es-Salaam

(i) Even before the meeting in New Delhi it was clear to us that not all theology produced in a Third World region is necessarily Third World theology Only that is Third World theology which springs from reflection on the Gospel of Jesus "as it comes alive in the struggles of his people to be fully human" [7] Its context is the Third World realities of dependence, oppression, struggle and hope The people's own culture and religion, the wretchedness of the masses, their recognition of the systemic roots of poverty, their organisation and readiness for action and for risk are all reflected upon in the light of the options and promises of Jesus, and in the power of the struggle that took him to the cross The purpose of EATWOT is to develop a theology that speaks with the voice of the poor and the marginated in history Third World theology is therefore accountable, under God, to the masses of our countries who suffer, struggle and hope

(ii) The wretched of the earth challenge our traditional theology. Tissa Balasuriya characterises traditional theology as culture-bound

7. J R CHANDRAN, Opening Address, New Delhi Conference.

and Western, Church-oriented, male and clerical, capitalistic, lacking social analysis and devoid of action-orientation.[8]

> Western theology has read the Scripture from the point of view of the dominant classes The new theologies of the oppressed and the poor are looking at the event of Jesus Christ from their oppression and poverty, from the underside of history.[9]

It was seldom if at all that traditional theology denounced slavery, exploitation of the working class or conquests. It has often been accomplice in "the international system of exploitation under colonialism, neo-colonialism, and imperialism" "European theology, with few exceptions, played an important role of ideological legitimization of an economic mode of production that has caused many injustices both in Europe and abroad in the Third World."[10] The silence of Western theology on the vital issues of poverty and human anguish is "an indication of its preoccupation with an oppressive system which impoverishes over three fourths of the world's population"[11] The theology taught in most Third World seminaries and Divinity schools is abstract and a-historical Its focus is on conceptualizing and systematising Christian symbols rather than on the historical life of the community An a-historical theology can easily become part of oppressive systems.

(iii) Historical theology cannot but reflect social and cultural differences. It cannot be universal. Its language and interests are "related to the economic and social context in which we live"[12] The Dar statement had already mentioned our increasing awareness "of the impact of the political, social, economic, cultural, racial and religious conditions on theology"[13] The context influences perception of the content Neglect of this fact has led the West to assume uncritically that their theology has universal and eternal validity They failed to see that "the theology of the colonizers, for instance, was in most cases attuned to the justification of this inhumanity"[14] Christian communities on all the three continents have discovered that "the pretended universal discourse of theology does not interpret their reality"[15] As Bimwenyi affirms

> The end of the illusion of a universal, all-inclusive discourse and the heightened consciousness of the regional and local character of any discourse

8 Tissa BALASURIYA, "Liberation of Theology in Asia", in *FH*, pp 19-26
9 Sergio TORRES, in *EG*, p xv
10 Sergio TORRES, in *ATR*, p 4
11 Sergio TORRES, "Irruption of the Third World· A Challenge to Theology", paper prepared for the New Delhi Conference
12 Sergio TORRES, in *EG*, p xi
13 Dar-es-Salaam Statement, *EG*, pp 259, 269-270
14. Ibid., pp. 263, cf 267
15. Sergio TORRES, in *ATR*, p. 4.

> have increased the need for theologizing that is proper to each of the three great socio-cultural areas of Asia, Africa, and Latin America One fact was already evident without waiting for anyone's authorization, people were reflecting and thinking in Asia, in Africa, and in Latin America A decentralization of authoritative statements about theological meanings was taking place Authoritative theological formulations and direction were already showing an irreversible trend to drop off The Third World was ceasing to be just a consumer of ideologies, even theological ideologies [16]

As a consequence we reject as irrelevant all abstract theologies unrelated to contexts, all academic theologies divorced from action, all theological traditions that represent a form of cultural domination In a spirit of faith and solidarity, with truth and honesty we sustain the mounting reaction against the ideological imperialism of the West [17]

(iv) That implied also a radical break in approaches to theology In a Third World approach to theology commitment to the liberation of the oppressed becomes the first act of theology — a commitment to the prevention of exploitation and every kind of oppression, including racism, sexism and cultural domination, to the promotion of justice and peace and the creation of an equal society. The great historical contradiction of today and the great challenge to the disciples of Jesus is the deep division between the rich and the poor [18] In New Delhi we agreed that the theologian cannot remain on the plane of reflection alone without taking part in the struggle His commitment is not only to theology but first of all to liberation Jesus was involved and got killed That is why he could reveal the saving God It is in commitment to liberation that we meet the God of justice In situations of injustice that is the only way to meet God Commitment is a sacrament We must relate the Incarnation to justice That God has come and God is just means that unjust relationships amount to rejection of God At the same time we wish to emphasise the difference between commitment and activism Commitment includes awareness, silence, reflection and contemplation In our commitment we have to be free

(v) We are agreed that in our theological task "our orienting principle" will be the poorest of the poor in our communities We have to insert ourselves in the movement of the poor for a just society, remembering that "the whole of the biblical record reveals that the struggles of the poor for their liberation are signs of God's action in history".[19] The poor have begun to look at history from below,

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16 O K BIMWENYI, art cit, in *Voices* (December 1981), p 21
17. *EG*, p 269, *ATR*, p 193
18 *EG*, p 269, *BCC*, p 1
19. Sergio TORRES, "Irruption of the Third World ".

from their own perspective. They have begun to read the Bible from below. Third World theology requires that we make our own the point of view of the oppressed who discover in history and in the Scriptures a God who liberates and who insists on justice, a God who dethrones the mighty and gives the Kingdom to the poor

(vi) The Bible is being discovered by the poor themselves In their view the Bible and life are linked "When they open the Bible the poor want to see there the things of life and in life they want to see the things of the Bible. Understanding the Bible as a critical mirror of reality awakens a sense of inquiry in people"[20] The people then read the Bible differently. The militant reading of it by the Third World is salutary to the First World which has often used the Gospel to legitimize exploitation It is a response also to Marxists who reject the Christian message as opium of the people

The poor however are not people of the book Theirs is oral tradition The majority of them are illiterate And the majority of the poor are not Christians The religion of the vast masses of the poor is non-scriptural Over-concentration then on the Bible can be otiose It is theopraxis that roots theology, The commitment to liberation is already an expression of the Faith interpreted contextually It can find further expression in drama, song, service and celebration In face of the oral tradition of the masses what ultimately matters is not hermeneutics of texts but of life, event, celebration and encounter with God and his Kingdom But in a true sense the Bible is the book of the poor It sprang from their experience of liberation struggles It belongs to them. They have an affinity and empathy for it. They have the sensitivity to capture the sense, the images, the symbols, the celebrations of the biblical narratives People's insights and interpretations can enrich scholars and Churches We may say that the criteria for authentic hermeneutics come from the poor They are its privileged readers, and the Third World is the privileged place for reading the Scriptures The poor of non-scriptural traditions are privileged hearers not only of the Bible but of the good news of the Kingdom that comes in the struggles and commitment for justice and human dignity.

(vii) The new approach revises the concept of knowledge and truth Knowledge is our "immersion in the process of the transformation of the world and the construction of a new world" rather than mere conformity of the mind to something already given We see the world as an unfinished project Theological truth then goes

20. Julio de Santa Ana, *Towards a Church of the Poor*, Geneva: WCC 1979. p 72.

beyond conformity to revelation as given in scripture. It goes on to discern present evil in the structures of the world and of the human heart, and to discover the liberating movements in the ongoing history.[21]

(viii) In methodology the point of departure for Africa is Anthropology, while for Asia it is Human Experience, and for Latin America the Oppressed people and their struggles Respect for the different approaches is part of our intercontinental solidarity

(ix) The term Third World is used because it is current and convenient In Dar-es-Salaam some Latin Theologians questioned the propriety of including US Blacks in the EATWOT We therefore needed to clarify the meaning of the term, its meaning is not unrelated to our method Generally the term has been applied geographically to the continents of Latin America, Africa and Asia minus Japan These are the 'underdeveloped' continents But when the term is used in theology, geography is not the main point There is a First World in many Third World countries and a Third World in many First World countries There are Asians who ideologically do not identify with Asia's aspirations, their hearts, interests and future are bound up with the dominant classes of the world [22] For our purpose Third World has to be understood "in terms of the historical facts of colonial and imperialist domination and economic exploitation of these regions by the European and other North-Atlantic powers and the consequent creation of third-worldness. The regions known as the Third World are eloquent monuments and symbols of man's sinful aggressiveness and inhumanity against fellow men"[23] Historically Third World countries have been part of the capitalist system of the West In the last twenty years some of them have chosen the socialist way Such are Vietnam, Ethiopia, Angola, Mozambique, Cuba, etc But on the whole Third World countries are still dominated by Europe, the USA or Japan Since Dar the African and Asian contention has prevailed that the Third World refers to the condition of dependence and to the situation of economic exploitation, political oppression and cultural subjugation That is why the oppressed minority groups of the USA are in the EATWOT [24]

In our methodology, then, practice and theory, action and reflection, discussion and prayer, movement and silence, social analysis and religious hermeneutics, involvement and contemplation constitute a single process

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21 Sergio TORRES, in *ATR*, p 5.
22. Sergio TORRES, in *EG*, p ix
23. J. R CHANDRAN, op cit
24. James CONE, "From Geneva to Sao Paolo A Dialogue Between Black Theologians and Latin American Theologians", in *BCC*, pp 265-280

2. *Death and Life*

Death and Life is the overarching theological theme in the shade of which most of our thinking in Delhi grew.

(i) The threat of nuclear holocaust, armament race for profit and promotion of armed conflicts have created an unprecedented situation of Death. We live in the shadow of Death's outspread wings Life is menaced. But there are other forms of Death which devour more people than war does, though with less noise Capitalism condemns the masses to hunger and kills people in a variety of brutal and subtle ways The slaughter of peasants in Latin American countries, the butchery of Harijans and radical youth in India and rule by apartheid, assassination and torture are all in the logic of the system In that logic is the plunder of nature and the pollution of the foundations of life And pollution kills slowly if not suddenly People are murdered in large numbers both physically and culturally The Neutron Bomb is the ultimate symbol of Death. It and what it is meant to protect are anti-life and anti-Christ. The threat of a nuclear holocaust thrusts us back to the eschatological horizon On a sudden the Eschaton has become real, political, existential Time is up, the Kingdom is imminent, turn round and break away from the powers of Death Third World theology vows to combat the reign of Death

(ii) There are massive protests against nuclear weapons. Young people, women, workers, the masses in numerous parts of the world are saying a clear No to the minions of Death and managers of wars That No is a clear Yes to life It is the declaration of a deliberate option for that which God creates and gifts to us with love· for life, for the earth, for food for all who are hungry. God is the living God, God is the God of life To believe in the living God is to stand up for life when it is threatened so radically. Jesus came so that people might have life in full abundance. If God and Jesus are for life they surely reject our systems of deprivation and death They reject them and ask us to join them in a global endeavour for the abolition of systems of death God in Christ calls for a New Economic order to assure the good and abundant life for all

(iii) In this context of abundant Death and abounding combat agains it, the Resurrection becomes a theme of new vitality and complete relevance Not a resurrection in some apocalyptic future, but a renewal and upsurge of life now in the resistance and uprising of the downtrodden A resurrection according to the promises of the Magnificat of the Mother of Jesus. In most religions there is a

tendency to underrate life on earth. Biblical faith, on the contrary, affirms and reaffirms the earth and commits us to its liberation, cultivation and completion The Kingdom of God keeps coming on our earth and realizing itself in history in terms of forgiveness, acceptance, community, health and rice

(iv) It is necessary, therefore, to emphasise the urgency of paying attention to concrete local human issues Global issues of nuclear bombs and Multinationals are surely important. But they can be too distant and sophisticated for the poor. The poor understand life in terms of the earth they touch, the work they do and the needs they know and the sorrows they bear. The life that God makes and gives must be taken in the first place in its basic form, at its material foundations, in terms of immediate needs, food, water, freedom, dignity, employment, home, love, community, hope

3 *The Poor*

The poor and their world lack life They are deprived of it Their life is crushed, thinned out and cut short Their life has been stolen from them, or snatched with violence There are a large number of Hebrew words for oppression, and all of them mean stealing from the needy God therefore takes their side and struggles along with them. That is why the Third World and its poor are a privileged place of revelation. But what does that mean ? Is that still another devise to keep it a going concern ? There is nothing good in keeping the Third World Third and the poor poor The Third World is also a place of death, of injustice and murder, a place of the demonic But for that very reason it is a place of struggle for justice and not a place of privilege Its striving is to overcome its third-worldness and the demonic in it. That precisely is what makes it privileged. It is in the struggle of the poor that God speaks and reveals himself That is the stand the Bible takes. It is different from the Constantinian idea that God is in the wars of the rich. The privilege of the poor, then, is not a national or social factor, it is not even a moral factor The poor are not privileged on the basis of race or virtue or learning They are dear to God because they are victims of the system, reduced to nothings, underdeveloped by the mighty [25] They are elected and the Word is addressed to them. So they stand close to God and organise the struggle. They and God through them are now inviting us to conversion.

The poor are privileged not because they are poor but because they are treated unjustly. They are ostracised as untouchables, their

25 1 Cor 1. 26-31; Mk 12. 10-12.

land is taken away from them in many fraudulent ways, legal and illegal. If God comes into history it is always to act for the widow and the orphan, for the enslaved and the downtrodden. But are we not being romantic about the poor ? Theirs is not a beautiful world Surely, we are not saying that God reveals himself in the oppression and misery of our continents ? To say that the poor are privileged *is to be ambiguous It is not in poverty, squalor or oppression that God is present with self-disclosure. It is rather in the struggle of the oppressed for justice and liberty that revelation takes place Those who struggled in Nicaragua took seriously the word of Jesus that God has taken the poor to evangelize For they are open to him · open in their* very *work for bread, or rice, open in the process of culture which is* bread, rice and *work; open in the hope that the rice taken away and* the dignity destroyed can be won back, *open in their readiness to risk* their life and start the struggle and let the grain fall so that new life may emerge and the Kingdom come. God therefore makes them his co-workers to set things right. They are open to God because being crushed and ground down they know what hope in God is Surely we should not sacralise poverty But in a context like that of Latin America or Asia, where power and wealth are instruments of oppression, those who suffer without being responsible for it are close to God or God is close to them. It is not poverty that is privileged but the poor who are poor because of structures and traditions of greed and selfishness. These victims of sin God takes up to initiate a struggle for a new society in which oppression will be no more

Revelation continues to come in the life and struggles of the poor of our day. The Third World has multiple cultures and profound mystical experiences God moves there The pariahs of India are the ones to whom God reveals himself and communicates his mystery. In the dynamics of the Bible what the powerful of the earth reject, God chooses. That is the grace that enables the oppressed of yesterday and of today to produce the Bible, by telling their own story with a sense of humour, and sing their own song with passion and with joy. No revelation in any religion or in the history of any human group is closed. God's Kingdom keeps coming and enabling people everywhere to *keep responding and expressing themselves*

4. *Silence*

Struggle for liberation and justice is a privileged place not only of revelation but of contemplation as well; of contemplation precisely because it is a place of revelation There God comes to meet us; there God shows the divine Face and the encounter

happens In so many non-Christian religions contemplation is important and silence is central Is not the Third World a privileged place of Silence too? Not merely in the sense of the culture of silence, but in the profounder sense of an attentive and contemplative heart big with the Mystery? The First World talks too much about God Silence is the condition of all speech about God as it is the condition of all speech about love Both praxis and contemplation are the source of theology In Dar-es-Salaam we said that commitment is the first act of theology Now we deepen that by adding Silence is the first act of theology Thus our methodology is our spirituality

5 *Discernment*

We reject capitalism as incompatible with Biblical faith. But we also critique the praxis of socialism Why is an authentic cultural revolution absent in many socialist experiments? Bourgeois values and attitudes perdure Petty bickerings, conflicts and armed skirmishes occur among some socialist countries, thus disclosing the survival of powerful pre-socialist mentalities and interests The limitations laid on people's participation in ever fuller freedom in all that concerns social power and social existence have made socialism repellent to the healthier elements in bourgeois societies[26] Criticism must apply also to the "third way the reformist path, of which there is not a little talk in some quarters in the Third World and in religious circles everywhere

VII. *Look Back, Look Forward*

In New Delhi LATWOT decided to continue for another five years It will hold a dialogue in January 1983 with the First World theologians who have shown special interest in our work In the coming years greater emphasis will be laid on regional research and creative programmes through which our methodology can seek continued historical verification

We arrived at no synthesis though that was a centre piece on our agenda when we began We gave up the idea early enough in the course of the conference. It was found that the differences between continents and among countries within any continent were so great as to call for much careful probing before they could understand each other and enter into a well-knit synthesis to serve as a place of freedom, unity and growth It was in this inter-continental meeting that for the first time we saw these differences at close quarters and

26 Ajit Roy, "This Hour of History", paper prepared for the New Delhi Conference

were fascinated by them. We also felt that our methodology could do with some sharper focussing, so it would be better equipped to assist at the birth of the synthesis we look forward to. That is why some wondered whether we were yet ready for dialogue with First World theologians Should we not first pay some more attention to the question of culture, to the problem of racism and the situation of women ? Should we not give ourselves time to find for our method a fuller, clearer and more shapely expression ? But then, maybe, the meeting with First World theologians will help define for us our own identity in a new light and will reveal our real weaknesses as well as our real strengths.

In New Delhi we spoke a great deal about the poor But why did we not have the poor with us to speak for themselves ? I was vaguely aware from the start of this anomaly and lacuna but failed in the midst of organisational preoccupations to surface it for action We shall have to take the poor and their culture more seriously in the future

We prayed for less in Delhi than in Sao Paolo despite the fact that we were in India, in Asia, and spoke so much about religion, spirituality and contemplation The Sao Paolò way of putting prayer within the theological programme instead of in its margin deserves to be recommended

It was well, perhaps, and necessary to describe domination at the length we did, but it was not well that we did not give as much attention to the numerous ongoing struggles all over our continents, to the courage and hope they witness to, to the meaning of events when non-Christians give their life in defence of the brother and his rights These struggles are of immense import for our continents and for our theology.

One of the participants said This conference has been different from the one I have just been attending in Europe Here nobody was competing No anxious striving to exhibit one's credentials and win recognition. Here people were more friendly and more earnest What made the difference ? I think I know There the focus was each person's achievement Here it was the people

Another wrote in a letter· The conferences for me are more a celebration of our frustrations and dreams than concrete work I am satisfied with the results. The Association has been strengthened More people now feel responsible for the future.

Sebastian Kappen's Jesus and Freedom: A Critique

Joseph KOTTUKAPALLY, S.J.

SEBASTIAN Kappen's book, *Jesus and Freedom* (New York: Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1977 — hereafter, cited as JF), hailed by François Houtart of Catholic University, Louvain, as an "important contribution to thought and a witness which all those who want to work on the side of the oppressed, in reference to Jesus Christ, will welcome with deep joy" (JF, Introduction by F Houtart, 16), has been in print for over four years The book and the author made news recently, in the context of a letter to Kappen from the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, communicating to him the result of a Vatican-required post-publication censorship of the book and Kappen's own rejoinder (in the form of an "Open Letter", published as Supplement to Number Twenty-Nine of his occasional Tract, *Anawim* — hereafter, cited as AS) The publication of the book had passed off rather quietly As Kappen says in the Preface, in the circles in which the book came to be known, the contents of the book were quite familiar Probably, many an eyebrow used to be raised while listening to Kappen's unfailingly stimulating lectures or while reading his articles, written in his incisive style However, maybe owing to a certain extraordinary sense of delicacy, maybe because one did not feel sure how to clearly articulate one's feeling of uneasiness or for whatever other reason, Kappen's book has gone, not only publicly unchallenged, but also not seriously discussed in private circles The reaction was always somewhat muted, be it uncritical adulation and approval or resentful disapproval and rejection I consider this whole situation rather unfortunate, and less than fair to Kappen, who could do better with frank and open discussion of his unconventional views by friends and colleagues, rather than with gestures and declarations of solidarity in the face of a censure threat, which could have been rendered superfluous if there had been constructive criticism and mutually beneficial dialogue We have no clear idea what are the issues of the censor It would be hardly fair to comment on them or take a stand in relation to them merely on the strength of the references made to them in Kappen's rejoinder My intention in this article, therefore, is to discuss certain key theological issues in the book, chiefly in the first chapter on methodology, with no reference to the points raised by the censor.

I

Kappen sees in censorship a threat to the future of Asian theology, as he says in the very title of his rejoinder, a threat coming from the Western mode of thinking, which is "representational", "analytical",

"technological", and geared to "domination", whereas the Asian way of thinking is "unitive", "experiential", "communing" (AS, 3f). Kappen is convinced that "If we Indians have no other way to meet God as revealed in the life and teachings of Jesus than by mentally reenacting the history of Western Christianity we are of all men the most to be pitied" (JF, 23).

Much as I too feel that censorship and its operational style are anachronistic, and often oppressive, I wonder if it is not also anachronistic and outmoded to make so much today of the "incompatibilities" between the Eastern and Western modes of thinking as to expose ourselves to the spell of clichés Besides (one hates to say it though) what is so particularly and uniquely Asian or Indian about *Jesus and Freedom*, except that the author is an Indian and that he situates his interpretation of Jesus' message in the socio-political reality of this country ? The book is in English (in very chaste British English, I should say) and it is consciously addressed to "youth in other countries also" (JF, viii) Kappen's methodology and the categories he uses are as Western as any I have been acquainted with. I could not find one reference in the whole book (except to be sure, in the chapter on the analysis of the Indian situation) to an Indian or Asian author. The bibliography is entirely Western and the book was published in the U S (of all countries !). The Introduction is provided by a Western Sociologist-theologian I am not pointing all this out in disparagement of Kappen's work, far from it I only want to make it out that it is hardly relevant for the discussion of the book to be aggressively defensive about our Indianness or Asianness

Neither would it seem to serve much purpose to question the existential-ideological commitment of the censor. An argumentation like "If my book were scrutinized by any *Indian* theologian who *lives* his hope in the Kingdom and has made a definitive option in favour of the poor, the judgement would have been quite different" (AS, 9 — Kappen's emphasis) would seem to make any meaningful discussion a priori impossible For who can really judge the quality of another's hope in the Kingdom and option in favour of the poor ?

I may frankly admit that I am one of those who have gratefully and admiringly listened to Kappen's lectures, read his always stimulating articles and so heartily welcomed the publication of his book. I have been struck by the boldness, the honesty, the personal involvement, but above all the passionate attachment to Jesus and the impatience and anger over the injustice inflicted upon the poor and marginalized evident in Kappen's spoken and written words.

Not that I consider so original the exclusive stress on the humanness of Jesus, the passion to discover and thus recover the real Jesus of history behind the tangled mess of cult, dogma and institution and the concern to make this Jesus (in all his historical authenticity and strangeness) relevant to our time and our struggles for meaning and being.

If we had lived the post- and anti-Arianistic divinity-obsessed Christology for nearly seventeen centuries, we have put that Christo-

logy by and large behind us since many decades, thanks to Rahner and Bultmann and a host of others before and after them — all, great pace-setters of contemporary theology. What I find really original in Kappen is his very personal and largely successful attempt to make the new Christology (or shall we rather say Jesuology in this case ?) relevant in the context of this country And speaking of this country, I can only endorse fully Kappen's "ideological option" in analysing and setting forth the socio-political reality of the country with the forces and structures which frustrate the struggle of the Indian masses for a better morrow.

II

All my admiration and gratitude notwithstanding, there are a number of points on which I feel obliged to join issue with Kappen. But, before coming to these, let me briefly, though not comprehensively, sum up what I consider to be his basic stand.

> Jesus has a very relevant message for us, in relation to the struggle for a new humanity and new world. To discover this message in its originalness and authenticity, we need to get behind all the traditional images of Jesus, behind the Christ of faith, cult, dogma and institution, to the real Jesus of history. This is possible by means of the critical study of the Synoptic Gospels, as has been established by contemporary biblical scholarship The Jesus thus rediscovered must be honestly seen as inevitably belonging to a world which is strange for us, thinking in the categories and speaking the language of his world. But beyond all strangeness and beyond all limitations of language and thought categories, there is much that is perennially valid in Jesus' message This core of the original Jesus message, thus critically established, must be creatively interpreted in its concrete relevance to our world in such a way that we might legitimately speak of going beyond Jesus with Jesus The Jesus thus critically recovered from the Gospels is above all the Prophet of the Kingdom of God, who should now inspire us to revolutionary commitment to the poor and the cause of their liberation, alongside all others so committed

There can be no question about the critical relevance of the Jesus of history and his authentic message for us today Not even Kappen's most conservative critic can have a different view in this matter. I am entirely at one with Kappen that the Jesus of history, that is, the real Jesus behind all the dogmatic, cultic and pietistic overgrowth of the centuries, has to be *re*-discovered For one thing, no disciple (and apostle, shall we add) of Jesus can afford to rest content with some sort of common or received image of the Master. No, Jesus must needs be encountered in his uniquely individual and individuating reality and personhood by every disciple. Also for the Jesus community, as such, this remains a non-negotiable imperative. I feel Kappen's emphasis on the need to disengage the real Jesus from the Jesus image of cult, dogma and institution is quite in place, because here we are dealing with a vital point that cannot be but is often taken for granted. For the rediscovery of the historical Jesus we need the help of contemporary critical scholarship — and more, as Kappen himself has indicated (cf. JF 26). I think that the "responsiveness to the God who

reveals himself in history" (*ibid.*) would demand no less than a revolution of the spirit, *metanoia*, which, again, cannot be taken for granted. This would imply, among other things, that theology refuse to serve as ideology or ideological tool, as, alas, it has too often and for too long done in the past. It must experience a self-radicalising in terms of its root-ground. And theology's proper root-ground is no other than God-in-Jesus. If this is felt to involve a circularity, the theologian need not feel embarrassed or be apologetic; for every circle need not be "vicious", as the contemporary science of hermeneutics has taught us.

None can reasonably dispute that the Jesus of history was by no means a cult figure or a teacher of eternal verities, any more than he was the founder of traditional theology's Mother Church, not to speak of Christendom; that Jesus' being driven by his passion (unto death) for the Kingdom and his consequent stance of relentless confrontation with the powers that be should mean very much for contemporary Jesus people Kappen has well said that the real Jesus of history, thus rediscovered, is not to be grasped or clung to, but transcended, in terms of the God who is greater than he and the tasks and struggles we have to undertake today So we can very well say with Kappen that Jesus' "message needs to be reinterpreted in a spirit of creative fidelity" (JF 24).

But here I am not writing a book review, but a critique, and my critical questions are the following: Is it theologically legitimate and critically possible to get behind, not only cult and dogma and institution, but also the Faith Proclamation or Kerygma of the Primitive (and contemporary) Church ? Secondly, even if this were possible, is such an enterprise useful or worthwhile for the desired transformation of our world ? Thirdly, is it necessary to get behind the Kerygma in order to disengage Jesus from cult, dogma and institution, so as to encounter him in his unique and uniquely challenging originality, authenticity and relevance for us ?

III

I have, sure, heard of Bultmann who, in fact, drawing heavily upon the devastating evidence provided by William Wrede, said that the Synoptic Gospels, in particular, Mark (presumably the most original and earliest of the three), no less than John, are, every phrase, the record and testimony of faith and, every bit, theologically charged, and, consequently (as Albert Schweitzer had demonstrated with such incomparable virtuosity in his classic, *From Reimarus to Wrede: The Quest of the Historical Jesus*), any attempt to extricate a Jesus of history from the Christ of faith is foredoomed I have also heard of the post-Bultmannian challenge to Bultmann's despair (I have a lurking suspicion, though, that the post-Bultmannians were not entirely conversant with the real problematic which the great master had been grappling with) regarding the Jesus of history and his consequent option for demythologized existentialistic interpretation of the Kerygma and Jesus' message. (I am not sure how Bultmann

established the "originality" and "authenticity" of this message, given his despair about the life and person of Jesus). The post-Bultmannians (as is well known, all of them were Bultmann's devoted and admiring pupils) pointed out to the master that the essential content of the Kerygma was precisely Jesus of Nazareth *as* the Christ of faith, or, the Crucified man Jesus as the Risen Lord This being the case, the post-Bultmannians held, we ought, by the demand of truthfulness and fidelity to the Kerygma, return to the Jesus of history They felt confident that the return was possible (notwithstanding Wrede and Schweitzer) by means of a critical examination of the Synoptic Gospels and, thus, by recovering (with high probability if not full certainty) the original, that is, pre-resurrection Jesus and his message in essential contours I know that ever since Bultmann's most celebrated pupil, Ernst Kasemann, threw out the challenge to the master in 1954, the post-Bultmannian position has nearly held the field But I am not sure that Bultmann's own rejoinder to his enfant-terriblistic pupils that, by the logic of their own basic position, it is neither warranted nor possible to get *behind* the Kerygma to look for, let alone recover the Jesus of history, has been either taken serious note of or satisfactorily answered In other words, you can't have it both ways, Bultmann would say, you must either take the Kerygma as such, with its mythical language and world-view, including, indeed, chiefly, the confession of the Risen Lord, or, then, demythologise the Kerygma as he had done To my knowledge, this stalemate between Bultmann and the post-Bultmannians has not been resolved, even though, possibly, also because of the embarrassment of the whole affair, it is not any more much talked about

Catholic theologians and Bible scholars have generally welcomed and followed the post-Bultmannian position, not making too much fuss about the talk of mythology and so on. They have assumed the legitimacy and theological inevitability of accepting the essential content of the Kerygma and, within its framework, attempted to trace their own critical picture of the Jesus of history

I am not interested in entering into any polemics on this point by raising the question whether Catholic biblical scholarship and criticism have adequately mastered Bultmann's difficulties What I want to note is that Kappen's quest of the historical Jesus seems to stand, by conscious and deliberate choice, outside the Kerygma. In fact, Kappen makes no bones about it In his defence of his basic position (in the rejoinder mentioned above) Kappen maintains that the "transition from the Jesus of history to the Christ of faith .is not to be viewed solely as one from the implicit to the explicit, from the incohative to the full, as the censor seems to think; it is also one of *alienation and distortion*, as I have again and again pointed out in my book" (AS, 7 — emphasis added) Making no distinction between the New-Testament interpretation of Jesus as the Lord and the post-New-Testament and post-Constantinian interpretations, Kappen continues: "From the earliest times tradition has sought to tone down the radical stance of Jesus to suit the interest of the ruling classes" (ibid.).

Now, this is an amazing piece of history and interpretation of the New Testament, amazing, not merely from the point of view of Christian faith and theology, but also from the point of view of responsible historiography and historical criticism. It is for the first time (if we to some extent set aside Reimarus and his type of historiography) that we hear that the New Testament proclamation of the crucified as the Risen Lord and, *no less*, the Risen Lord as the crucified, was meant to serve the "ruling classes", presumably of the Roman imperium ! But let historiography be, let me stay with theology

For Kappen, the *primitive apostolic community*, the post-New-Testament Church of the martyrs, the post-Constantinian established Church and the post-Carolingian Christendom are all one undifferentiated lump and so he, shooting possibly well beyond his mark, rather too easily, goes about disengaging Jesus, not only from cult, dogma and institution, but also from the Kerygma

From the point of view of the Christian faith, not only of the Catholic Church but also of the entire Christian Oicumene, from the earliest times up to now, it is not legitimate to seek to get behind the Kerygma in the attempt to get to the Jesus of history For that matter, neither Bultmann nor any of the post-Bultmannians (not excluding the most radical ones like Herbert Brown, let alone the authors Kappen draws upon and the Latin American liberation theologians) takes such a stand Whatever the differences and divergences of interpretation, the entire post-Liberal theology of this century, has firmly stayed within the Kerygma And, whatever one's possible embarrassment due to one's "scientific-critical" sense, accepting Jesus as the Risen Lord and the Risen Lord as Jesus (there is no need to stress that this reversal of subject and predicate is not theologically idle !) is for the Christian a matter of Either/Or, *articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae* If your critical sense revolts against it, you have either to say, too bad for that critical sense, or, then, you say quits to your faith

As I said above, it is here not a question of censorship or censure But in all honesty we have to say that, compared to this position of Kappen, what Karl Rahner found "heretical" in Kung's questioning of the Infallibility dogma of Vatican I was child's play For, if what Kung challenged was a marginal article of Catholic doctrine, what Kappen has questioned is the very core and substance of the Christian faith

Now, even from the point of view of critical historiography, this sort of attempt to get behind the Kerygma to the Jesus of history would seem to be a highly unprofitable task We know only too well, what critical historical research can yield about Jesus, if we leave aside the New Testament. We may be able, with reasonable certainty, to affirm the bare fact of the existence of the man from Palestine, the nearly nameless profligate, crucified under Pontius Pilate, and whom his followers worshipped as a god There is no need to labour the point that this Jesus would serve hardly any purpose for our contemporary quest for justice for the poor As for the New Testament, as

was said above, there is no escaping the situation that every word, every expression and image in it are charged with the faith of teh primitive community and, consequently, for critical scholarship to confidently assert that this or that part is pure fact and the rest interpretation would not satisfy a radically critical sense. It will all be a matter of the highly personal and, to a large extent, arbitrary (in terms of purely objective criteria, I mean, if such criteria there ever were) choice of the scholar concerned The lesson of Albert Schweitzer's *Quest of the Historical Jesus* cannot be forgotten with impunity

It is, in fact interesting to note that Kappen's style of the quest, the lyricism of his language (see JF, 19ff, e g), the chivalry evident in his stress on the "duty of all who cherish the vision and hope of Jesus to set him free from the prison house of cult, dogma and institution so that he can freely go about pointing, as of old, his accusing finger at the scribes, pharisees, elders, priests and Herods of today" (JF, 23) and no less, his anxiety to "raise Jesus from the dead and give him a new name and habitation" (JF, 28) remind one of Renan more than anyone else !

I suspect, there is something unquestioned (and, as such, naive) about Kappen's preoccupation with identifying himself with the "scientific spirit" of our age in contrast to the "mythical" spirit of Jesus' time I don't know how many there are today who would make such a neat, clear and categorical distinction, seeing that our age has its own very powerful (some of them very useful, besides being inevitable) myths The question I wish Kappen had put to himself is, how scientific are such concepts (or, realities, let us say) as God, Sin Absolute meaning, Ultimate horizon, Kingdom of God and the like, all very favourite with Kappen !

Now, even supposing (*per impossibile* as I would say) that we did have a purely factual picture of the historical Jesus, what would that profit us ? That sort of historical Jesus, whatever his character and message, is a *dead and bygone* Jesus, and there would seem to be hardly any point in trying to resurrect him What normative or challenging role can this Jesus play for us or for anyone, for that matter, except as an inspiring teacher and model, say like Buddha or Socrates, or, maybe, as an *Ishtadeva* of one's (in objective view, arbitrary) choice, about which there is no possibility of reasoning or arguing ? I don't mean that such an interpretation of Jesus and his message is totally or in itself unwarranted or useless As with the innumerable Lives of Jesus of the pre-Schweitzerian and post-Bultmannian quests, as with such beautiful and moving presentation of Jesus as Gopal Singh's *The Man Who Never Died*, or K P Kesava Menon's *Jesudevan* (the most readable presentation of Jesus' life and message in Malayalam), no labour is here simply wasted But I doubt whether Kappen does not want his quest to yield much more than such lives of Jesus In any case, I would submit that if Kappen does mean to confront us with a Jesus who would in deed and in deadly earnest call us to decision and commitment, then there is no escape from the Kerygma and what it involves.

Kappen, as he explicitly states, would have Jesus inspire "educated youth in India who may seek in Jesus inspiration for radical commitment" (JF, vii) But he is also very well aware that radical commitment is possible without Jesus and his fellowship, that, for example, "the extreme radicals who are in prison today for the sole crime of having opposed an unjust society have a more authentic encounter with God" than many so-called disciples of Jesus (JF, 28, also 151). If Kappen aims his interpretation of Jesus at the so-called Jesus community, one fails to see what is gained in radicalism by trying to take Jesus outside the Kerygma But if his aim is the radicals outside the Jesus community, why does he bother these people with his Jesus, who belongs to a bygone age and who is such an alien to us in so many ways ? The qualities which Kappen emphasises in Jesus could be found in so much more contemporary and familiar shape in, say, Gandhi, Ho Chi Minh, Che Guevara and many others. Why not, indeed, let Jesus himself rest in his eternal peace, rather than try to resurrect him into this (for him) strange and bizarre world ?

Lastly, is it necessary to seek to get behind the Kerygma and faith in order to encounter Jesus in all his poignant relevance for us ? Is it necessary to seek to disengage Jesus from faith, in order to disengage him from our cult, dogma and institution ? To say again what has already been said, but now with stress in the reverse, in terms of the most competent and radical biblical criticism of our century, is it not the Jesus of history, the rebel and challenger of law, cult and dogma and tradition, the man from among the wretched and despised, the one who made to pay the bitter price for doing what he did and being what he was, who comes alive in the Risen Lord of the Kerygma ? It is not that I am again saying that the Gospels are concerned with the "personality" of Jesus or that we can have an "objectively" valid picture of the real Jesus I do, however, mean (as I hope, with the Jesus community and critical Bible scholarship) that the Gospels and the Kerygma (which is their heart and their most original and authentic *form*) essentially and substantially identify Jesus *as* the Christ, the proclaimer as the Proclaimed and that, therefore, for those who "have eyes to see", for those who "share Jesus' faith", as Kappen would say (and may I add, the faith which Jesus first gifts us with and, only as such, we share with him), Jesus is the Christ and Christ, Jesus. It is not as though a few bits of the historical Jesus, by some fluke, slipped into the "myth" of the Risen Lord and we can now recover them by clever scientific scholarship Rather, it is the humble figure of the historical Jesus which thoroughly informs the Risen Lord in his might and splendour, we might say, in a dialectical relationship of unity-in-distinction, so that it is just impossible to have the one without the other It is this Jesus Christ who is our eternal and dangerous contemporary, whom we need not raise from the dead, but who, rather, resurrects us from apathy, self-righteousness and death, who is not bound by our cult and dogma, our sacrament and institution, but binds and judges, why, also, in a way, upholds them all.

Are we thus, possibly, back to square one ? Are we implicitly condemned therefore to carry with us all the chattel of tradition, as

we go on our way with Jesus ? If anyone were to make such queries, the answer might have to be 'Yes and No'! After all Jesus saw himself at once bound and free — in regard to the Law and the tradition of the fathers, the authority of the priests and the wisdom of the scribes and pharisees.

It will be also well to remember that the Jesus of the Kerygma refused show and fame (Mt 4, 5-7; Mk 1, 23-25, 5, 6-8), power and kingship (Mt 4, 8-10, Jn 6, 14f, also, Mk 6, 30-50, 8, 1-10), that he wanted no tent put up for him (Mk 9, 2-13), demanded from his disciples and would-be disciples, not cult and sacrifice, correct belief and strict observance, but FOLLOWING and IMITATION — in humility and total renunciation (Mt 11, 25, Mk 10, 15, Lk 14, 25-33, also, Mt 8, 19-22, 19, 16-30), in totally self-sacrificing love of the neighbour (Jn 13, 34-35, 15, 12-17) Neither did Jesus mean by 'following' and 'imitation' something mystical, pietistic or ascetical (mysticism, piety and asceticism surely have their place in Christian life), but, primarily and above all, following and imitating him in his life of steadfast struggle for the Kingdom, which meant exactly Good News to the poor In fact, it seems to me surprising that even the liberation theologians, who make so much of the Jesus of the Gospels, have not stressed this aspect of the message of Jesus, which, notwithstanding its one-sidedly ascetical and pietistic interpretations in the past, cannot but be attributed paramount importance for liberation theology

I am not conversant with the most up-to-date Gospel criticism, but I suspect that the real historical Jesus was not such a secular person and so much anti-cult-dogma-and-institution, as Kappen would seem to make out (cf JF, 103f) I guess, Jesus prayed a lot and, very very jealously, kept an extremely special personal relation with the One whom he addressed Abba, that he celebrated with joy the religious festivals of his people including his last paschal festival (which, as it turned out, he had to 'celebrate' in such a cruelly secular fashion), that he dearly loved Jerusalem and the temple, that his last meal with his disciples was both a festive meal and meant to be a highly symbolic one And if this Jesus picture is true to fact, then, among other things, we too may have to seek to discover the real Jesus and, with him, our own concrete mission, within our contemporary Jesus community (the Church), by saying a radical 'Yes' to her, in faith, but without illusions, following the principle, *transcendence within* It is one thing not to separate the sacred and sacramental from the secular, contemplation and celebration from action and struggle, but it is quite another matter not to see the distinction here, so that, in practice, the sacred and sacramental get subsumed under the secular, contemplation and celebration, under action and struggle or what goes for these

IV

I do not want to appear condescending, but, for honesty's sake, I must add the following It may be interesting to speculate, why at all Kappen stays within the Catholic fold (as a Jesuit, for that matter !)

after having, seemingly, questioned, not to say, rejected, the core of the faith. Whatever the answer to this unseemly question, those who have had even a passing acquaintance with Kappen know what Jesus, the man Jesus, let us say — but not Jesus' "humanity"— means to him. It should be no exaggeration to say (what Kappen has implicitly said in his Preface) that many people, college students, seminarians and others, have felt inspired by his interpretation of the Jesus message, learned to feel fascinated by and attached to Jesus and have not been particularly shaken in their faith. I would like to reflect whether this is possibly due to the very peculiarity of the humanity of the man Jesus, which, when encountered in its real depth and seriousness, inescapably confronts you with Divinity. It could not be just accidental that Jesus most commonly referred to himself as son of man (we capitalise S and M, he did not!). It is also accepted as a safe conclusion of biblical criticism, and not against the most orthodox theology, that it took a long time and many an experience, as, also, much forbearance on the part of the Master, for the disciples to come to the final(?) realisation of who Jesus really was. Why, let us affirm with no embarrassment (and *pace* Kappen) that, as man, Jesus was indeed "wholly other" (cf. JF, 21), even in his very sameness with all of us, because, to speak the language of traditional theology, Jesus' humanity is the adequate and sole instrument and revelatory medium of his divinity and the divinity of the Father. Let us also add that, it is precisely because the "wholly other" humanity of Jesus is the very same as our common humanity (*pace* Karl Barth) that we encounter Jesus in the wretched of the earth, in the hungry, thirsty, naked, sick, homeless, imprisoned little ones.

This is why I think that it is not censure and condemnation that Kappen's book calls for any more than adulation and clannish support, but responsive, co-reflective, fraternal critique, which should be for all concerned an exercise in and experience of the ineffable and incomparable Jesus-fellowship.

Documents

Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens* of Pope John Paul II on Human Labour

Work, Key to Whole Social Question

IN 1891, Leo XIII issued the first great social encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, which has been rightly considered as the *Magna Carta* of the rights of the worker It dealt with the 'social question' which was then understood as the problem of the proletarian working class that was exploited by profit hungry industrialists and capitalists in the name of Liberalism The workers tended to abandon their faith and turn to the Marxist ideology for a solution to their problems Although the encyclical came 40 years after the Communist Manifesto, it was a courageous act for the times It severely condemned the exploitation of the working class and asked for a just solution of the social problem in the light of Christian principles It would remain the point of reference for all social documents since then

Now, 90 years later, in his third encyclical dated September 14, 1981, John Paul II still considers work as the key to the social question. The difference is that in the intervening decades, the social question has become much more complex and 'work' itself is understood in a much broader and comprehensive way It is not only a question of the problems of workers but of the very nature of work which is a *fundamental dimension of man's existence* This is confirmed by human sciences as well as the conviction of faith The whole encyclical can be considered as an extended commentary on the words of Genesis "So God created man in his own image And God blessed them, and God said to them 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it'" (Gen 1 27-28)

Doctrine Centred on the Human Person

The Church's social doctrine since Leo XIII has always centred round the *dignity and rights of the human person* The present encyclical accentuates this perspective "The primary value of work is man himself" (6) This is coherent with the focus of the first encyclical of the Pope · "Man is the primary and fundamental way for the Church" (*Redemptor Hominis*, no 14)

Work is seen "as a great reality with a fundamental influence on the shaping in a human way of the world that the Creator has entrusted to man" (11) "As man, through his work, becomes more and more the master of the earth and as he confirms his dominion over the whole visible world, again through his work, he nevertheless remains in every case and at every phase of this process within the Creator's original ordering. And this ordering remains necessarily and indis-

solubly linked with the fact that man was created, as male and female, 'in the image of God'" (4)

Work has an individual and a social dimension "This *process* is, at the same time, *universal* it embraces all human beings, every generation, every phase of economic and cultural development, and at the same time it is a process that takes place *within each human being*, in each conscious human subject Each and every individual is at the same time embraced by it Each and every individual, to the proper extent and in an incalculable number of ways, takes part in the giant process whereby man 'subdues the earth' through his work" (4).

Work in the Objective and Subjective Sense

This distinction looks abstract but is pregnant with meaning and far-reaching consequences Work in the objective sense is highly differentiated The development of industry, especially in the field of miniaturization and telecommunications, shows how vast is the role of technology This is undoubtedly man's ally But it can also become his enemy, "as when mechanization of work 'supplants' him, taking away all personal satisfaction and the incentive to creativity and responsibility, when it deprives many workers of their precarious employment, or when, through exalting the machine, it reduces man to the status of a slave" (5)

But even in the present mechanized era, "the proper subject of work continues to be man" (6) As a person, *man is the subject of work* That is why the encyclical says "Independently of their objective content these actions must also serve to realize his humanity, to fulfil the calling to be person that is his by reason of his very humanity" (6) This subjective dimension of dominion in the work process conditions the very ethical nature of work This truth, the Pope affirms, has tremendous significance for the formulation of important social problems

The ancient world was divided into classes according to the type of work done Manual work was considered unworthy of the free man and allotted to slaves Nowhere was the discrimination so solidified as in India In Christian societies, the class system was somewhat more flexible and manual work was less despised because of the example of Jesus. But the difference between blue collar and white collar workers, not to mention the 'gold collar' managers, has persisted with all the discriminations in status and salary

The Pope draws from the Gospel the radical conclusion that "the basis for determining the value of human work is not primarily the kind of work being done but the fact that the one who is doing it is a person . Such a concept practically does away with the very basis of the ancient differentiation of people into classes according to the kind of work done" (7) The Pope clearly affirms that "the primary basis of the value of work is man himself, who is its subject"

But one may here ask What is the basis for the enormous disparity in wages between the various categories of workers? It is regrettable that the Pope does not raise this crucial point clearly. It should be

noted that only a few countries like the People's Republic of China have sought to reduce the disparity drastically. Why can't the Church insist on this?

Still, the Pope again draws attention to an important point that has been constantly made since Leo XIII. human work should not be treated as a special kind of 'merchandise', or an impersonal 'force' needed for the process of production To treat man as an "instrument of production" is the materialistic reversal of values that is the basic error of capitalism (7)

Work and Personal Dignity

The Pope affirms that "work is the means whereby man *achieves that 'dominion'* which is proper to him over the visible world, by 'subjecting' the earth" (9)

Work has always had an aspect of *toil* In primitive occupations it meant great physical exertion and hardship In modern industry there is the problem of boredom Every worker, whether agricultural, industrial or intellectual, is familiar with toil Yet, "in spite of all this toil perhaps, in a sense, because of it — work is a good thing for man It is not only good in the sense that it is useful or something to enjoy, it is also good as being something worthy, that is to say, something that corresponds to man's dignity, that expresses this dignity and increases it Through work man *not only transforms nature*, adapting it to his own needs, but he also *achieves fulfilment* as a human being and indeed, in a sense, becomes 'more a human being' " (9)

On the other hand, "it is well known that it is possible to use work in various ways against man, that it is possible to punish man with the system of forced labour in concentration camps, that work can be made into means for oppressing man, and that in various ways it is possible to exploit human labour, that is to say the worker" (9)

Conflict between Capital and Labour

The Pope goes to the heart of the matter when he traces the origin of the conflict between capital and labour "in the fact that the workers put their powers at the disposal of the entrepreneurs, and these, following the principle of maximum profit, tried to establish the lowest possible wages for the work done by the employees" (11) This analysis has already been done by Marx In fact, as a reaction to the 'liberal' ideology of the capitalists claiming unlimited freedom to manipulate the economic system to their advantage, there arose the collectivist theory According to this trend, human labour was to be preserved from exploitation by transferring all the means of production from private hands to the collectivity The proletariat was to seek to win a monopoly of power by a revolutionary process The consequent 'dictatorship of the proletariat' would pave the way to 'communism'

Here the Pope condemns the 'systematic class struggle' fostered by the Marxists. He rightly condemns 'struggle for struggle's sake', and the Marxists could be faulted for making class struggle an essential

principle of progress. But the encyclical, like past Church documents, does not show sufficient sensitivity to the realities of the situation by simply decrying class struggle The fact is that class struggle does exist It has not been initiated nor is it now prosecuted by the poor but by the oppressive capitalist class If the exploitation of the poor can be overcome by exhortations or by negotiations, so much the better But if it worsens, has not the exploited class the right to resist the oppressor? From this point of view, the encyclical marks a certain regression from *Populorum Progressio* (nn 30-31) which admitted even violence as a last resort

Priority of Labour over Capital

However, the encyclical does make a positive contribution to the resolution of the conflict between labour and capital It clearly establishes the *principle of the priority of labour over capital* In the process of production "labour is always a primary *efficient cause*, while capital, the whole collection of means of production, remains a mere instrument or instrumental cause" (12)

The resources of the earth are a gift of the Creator But the priority of human labour over capital becomes apparent when capital is seen to include "not only the natural resources placed at man's disposal but also the whole collection of means by which man appropriates natural resources and transforms them in accordance with his needs (and thus in a sense humanizes them), . *all these means are the result of the historical heritage of human labour*" (12) Thus everything that is at the service of work, everything that in the present state of technology contributes its ever more highly perfected 'instrument', is the result of work Here the primacy of man over things becomes manifest

The antinomy between labour and capital is not intrinsic, it originated partly in a materialistic conception of man and his activity, but even more so "in the whole of the *economic and social practice* of that time, the time of the birth and rapid development of industrialization, in which what was mainly seen was the possibility of vastly increasing material wealth, the means, while the end, that is to say, man, who should be served by the means, was ignored It was this practical error that struck a blow first and foremost against human labour, against the working man, and caused the ethically just social reaction already spoken of above" (13) Here the Pope admits that the reaction against capitalist exploitation is moral.

But he insists that in itself capital cannot be separated from labour A labour system can in principle be judged right "if in its very basis it overcomes the opposition between labour and capital" Today, while working, man also "enters into the labour of others". The Pope remarks that 'economism' and 'materialism' broke up this unified image. He finds that Marxist dialectical materialism is incapable of providing a sufficient and definitive basis for human work

However, it would have been good if the merits of Marxist social analysis were recognized before its limitations were pointed out. It is

true that the limited terrestrial vision of Marx cannot provide a total solution to the human problem But Marxist analysis has so clearly uncovered the mechanism of exploitation that it deserves to be termed 'scientific' We cannot evade the consequences of this analysis simply by saying that 'dialectical materialism' is unacceptable The encyclical does not tackle, even in a limited way as some earlier documents did, the crucial question of the relationship of Marxist social analysis to the overall ideological vision of Marx

Work and Ownership

The relationship between work and capital naturally leads to the issue of ownership of property The Pope again recalls that Christian tradition has never upheld the right to private ownership as absolute and untouchable "On the contrary, it has always understood this right within the broader context of the right common to all to use the goods of the whole creation" (14) Yet, one gets the impression that the primary universal destination of earthly goods does not come out as clearly as in *Gaudium et Spes* or *Populorum Progressio*

The Pope again points out that it is improper to set up some property in the form of 'capital' in opposition to 'labour' Starting from this opposition "to practise exploitation of labour is contrary to the very nature of these means (of production) and their possession" The Pope goes on to say that "they cannot be possessed against labour, they cannot even be possessed for possession's sake, because the only legitimate title to possession — whether in the form of private ownership or in the form of public or collective ownership — is that they serve labour and thus, by serving labour, that they should make possible the achievement of the first principle of this order, namely, the universal destination of goods and the right to common use of them" (14)

The Pope is against 'a priori' elimination of private ownership of the means of production He makes the point that "merely taking these means of production (capital) out of the hands of their private owners is not enough to ensure their satisfactory socialization They cease to be the property of a certain social group, namely the private owners, and become the property of organized society, coming under the administration and direct control of another group of people, namely those who, though not owning them, from the fact of exercising power in society manage them on the level of the whole national or the local economy" (14).

The Pope concludes that the position of 'rigid' capitalism continues to remain unacceptable But what about 'moderate' capitalism ? Is it enough to have limited socialization to resolve the problem of exploitation ? Although this question is not directly faced, it is not altogether evaded The proposal of *joint ownership* of the means of work which was first made by Pius XI in *Quadragesimo Anno* is here repeated. "A way towards that goal could be found by associating labour with the ownership of capital, as far as possible, and by producing a wide range of intermediate bodies with economic, social and cultural purposes" (14) Thereby the dignity of the human person would be safeguarded and their initiative fostered.

This sounds optimistic But how far will it help in checking the cycles of inflation and unemployment in the capitalistic world ? Above all, what about the greater part of the world's work force struggling for the minimum necessities of life ? The greatest weakness of the encyclical is its want of serious cognisance of their problem In spite of a passing reference to the Third World, it is written mostly from the viewpoint of the developed world.

However, a healthy trend in the encyclical is that both the capitalistic and socialistic systems are accepted as facts of life (15). In the past there was a tendency to point out the limitations of both the systems and then simply reject the socialistic system while suggesting improvements in the capitalistic one

Worker Solidarity

In the past the joint struggle of the workers for their rights was looked upon with considerable suspicion It was thought to contain subversive elements The present document considers it in a very positive light This is obviously due to the Polish situation The frequently recurring term 'solidarity' reminds one of the workers' movement in the Pope's home country "The impetuous emergence of a great burst of solidarity between workers" is called "important and eloquent from the point of view of social ethics It was the reaction against the degradation of man as the subject of work" (8)

The good effects of this solidarity are noted "Various forms of new systems have been thought out Workers can often share in running business and in controlling their productivity, and in fact do so Through appropriate association they exercise influence over conditions of work and pay, and also over social legislation" (8)

But the Pope also notes that flagrant injustices do persist or have newly been created New groups of people are undergoing "proletarianization" This is particularly true with regard to agricultural workers But it is also true with regard to unemployed intellectuals So the Pope calls for a "continued study of the subject of work" and for "new movements of solidarity of workers and with workers" (8)

The Pope defends the right of association of workers in unions They are called "a mouthpiece for the struggle for social justice, for the just rights of working people in accordance with their individual professions" (20).

Recourse to strike is allowed as a last resort. But the weapon must not be abused since "abuse of the strike weapon can lead to the paralysis of the whole socio-economic life, and this is contrary to the requirements of the common good of society, which also corresponds to the properly understood nature of the work itself" (20). This caution is all the more pertinent to 'essential community services' and to sections of workers who already have acquired undue advantages compared to the mass of poor workers in the unorganized sector

The Pope also points out that the struggle should be seen as an endeavour 'for' the just cause and not 'against' others The workers,

managers and employers are asked in some way to be united in a community of purpose The unions should be a constructive factor of social order and solidarity This is surely the ideal It needs to be particularly emphasized when at times trade unions do not show sufficient concern for the common good or become the tools of unscrupulous political leaders But struggle may be necessary in certain circumstances The workers in Europe had to engage in a class struggle when there was no other way of defending their rights Many were alienated from the Church when they did not find sympathy for their cause from Church leaders Now the basic struggle is not between workers and employers as much as between the poor and rich The struggle has not been started by the poor When it is imposed on them, can the Church remain indifferent to their right to defend themselves against the organized and structural violence unleashed on them ?

Rights of Workers

As a person, the worker has a right, not only to *due remuneration* but also to *self-fulfilment* in his work Hence excessive beaurocratic centralization "which makes one feel that he is just a cog in a huge machine moved from above" (15) is to be avoided

The rights of the workers are to be placed within the broader context of human rights as a whole Today the rights and duties of the worker are to be examined especially in relation to the 'indirect employer', whether it is the State or a private corporation Here the encyclical alludes to the exploitation of the workers in the poor countries by the policies of richer States and multinational corporations (17) But the analysis is far too weak and the enormity of the problem does not appear in the treatment of the matter

The encyclical does insist on the inherent rights of the worker, whatever be the type of work and whatever be the system of economy. Now the most fundamental issue is suitable employment for all who are capable of it The evils of unemployment, which at a certain stage can become a real social disaster, are described The 'indirect' employer is asked to make provision for over-all planning The State is asked to undertake just and rational coordination without one-sided centralization But is this possible in the capitalistic system with profit as the motive and the ability of the vested interests to influence the organs of government ? How are international treaties and agreements that the Pope recommends to meet the situation when the governments in rich countries are predominatingly influenced by the military-industrial complex with its wide ramifications especially in the mass media ?

The encyclical refers to the guidelines proposed by *Populorum Progressio* for cooperation among nations But the fact that they have been almost totally ignored calls for a more realistic analysis of the situation and bolder initiatives on the part of the Church than are found in the present document

Coming to specific rights, the encyclical insists on the just remuneration for work so that the workers can have sufficient access to

material goods which are basically intended by the Creator for common use. This presumes that all are employed In richer countries, to a certain extent, the State can give sufficient allowances for the unemployed, but this is far from realistic in poorer countries Here an important problem is the increased militancy of organized workers whereby they are steadily improving their position while little remains for unorganized workers and nothing for the unemployed

The encyclical also refers to other social benefits like health care, right to rest, vacation, social security for old age and accidents, and proper physical and moral conditions for work Family concerns are specially treated (see next section)

Some of the problems of agricultural workers, the disabled and migrant workers are also dealt with The difficulties of agricultural workers have started to receive special attention in Church documents since *Mater et Magistra* The present encyclical mentions their hardship, marginalization and exploitation at the hands of landlords In such situations, the Pope declares "Radical and urgent changes are therefore needed in order to restore to agriculture — and to rural people — their just value as the basis for a healthy economy, within the social community's development as a whole" (21)

The so-called land reforms have been attempted in several poor countries But they have largely met with failure since the vested interests have the power of bending the legal system to their advantage In India, the judiciary has been very obstructive regarding progressive legislation in this area So again the question is whether effective land reform is possible within the overall exploitative capitalist system

Family — Woman

The encyclical shows great sensitivity to the problems of women It says that toil "is familiar to women, who sometimes without proper recognition on the part of society and even of their own family bear the daily burdens and responsibilities for their homes and the upbringing of their children" (9)

"Work constitutes a foundation for the formation of family life" because "work is a condition for making it possible to found a family, since the family requires the means of subsistence which man normally gains through work" (10) Further, "work and industriousness also influence the whole process of education in the family, for the very reason that everyone 'becomes a human being' through, among other things, work, and becoming a human being is precisely the main purpose of the whole process of education" (10)

The Pope points out that "two aspects of work in a sense come into play here the one making family life and its upkeep possible, and the other making possible the achievements of the purposes of the family, especially education" The two aspects are mutually complementary "In fact, the family is simultaneously a *community made possible by work* and the first *school of work*, within the home, for every person" (10).

The encyclical calls for a *family wage* and a *re-evaluation of the mother's role* "Just remuneration for the work of an adult who is responsible for a family means remuneration which will suffice for establishing and properly maintaining a family and for providing security for the future" (19) This should be ensured either by a strict family wage "or through other social measures such as family allowances or grants to mothers devoting themselves exclusively to their families"

The encyclical tries to reconcile the right of the woman to take up a career outside the home with a social and even economic evaluation of her contribution to the home She should be able to take up a career of her choice, but at the same time she should not be forced to work outside the home when this would interfere with her maternal role The careful formulation of this passage recommends that it be quoted in full "Experience confirms that there must be a social re-evaluation of the mother's role, of the toil connected with it, and of the need that children have for care, love and affection in order that they may develop into responsible, morally and religiously mature and psychologically stable persons It will redound to the credit of society to make it possible for a mother — without inhibiting her freedom without psychological or practical discrimination, and without penalizing her as compared with other women — to devote herself to taking care of her children and educating them in accordance with their needs, which vary with age Having to abandon this task in order to take up paid work outside the home is wrong from the point of view of the good of society and of the family when it contradicts or hinders these primary goals of the mission of a mother" (19)

The Pope goes on to say that "it is fitting that they should be able to fulfil their tasks in accordance with their own nature, without being discriminated against and without being excluded from jobs for which they are capable, but also without lack of respect for their family aspirations and for their specific role in contributing, together with men, to the good of society The true advancement of women requires that labour should be structured in such a way that women do not have to pay for their advancement by abandoning what is specific to them and at the expense of the family, in which women as mothers have an irreplaceable role" (19).

This statement is quite enlightening and gives a definite direction in which society must move It is applicable to the West and to the middle class in India It is less relevant to the subsistence economy of poor families in which both husband and wife have both to work and look after their children as best they can

Spirituality of Work

The encyclical ends by tracing a spirituality of work with many elements taken from *Gaudium et Spes* of Vatican II

Work is a *personal activity*. "Since work in its subjective aspect is always a personal action , it follows that *the whole person, body and spirit,* participates in it, whether it is manual or intellectual work.

It is also to the whole person that the word of the living God is directed, the evangelical message of salvation, in which we find many points which concern human work and which throw particular light on it" (24).

Work is sharing in the activity of the Creator "Man, created in the image of God, shares by his work in the activity of the Creator and, within the limits of his own human capabilities, man in a sense continues to develop that activity, and perfects it as he advances further in the discovery of the resources and values contained in the whole of creation" (24).

This awareness ought to permeate even the most ordinary everyday activities since through them men and women are unfolding the Creator's work There is no opposition between man's achievements and the glory of God The encyclical, quoting *Gaudium et Spes* (n 34) says· "Far from thinking that works produced by man's own talent and energy are in opposition to God's power, and that the rational creature exists as a kind of rival to the Creator, Christians are convinced that the triumphs of the human race are a sign of God's greatness and the flowering of his own mysterious designs" (25)

The Gospel of salvation, instead of being a deterrent, is a stimulus to *building up a better world* Christians are called upon, even by their secular activity, to assist one another to live holier lives unto the *praise of God*

Christ proclaimed the 'Gospel of work' by his own life and activity He himself was a man of work, a craftsman "He looks with love upon human work and the different forms that it takes, seeing in each one of these forms a particular facet of man's likeness to God, the Creator and Father" (26) The Pope refers to the boast of Paul concerning his trade whereby he was able even as an Apostle to earn his bread, the same Paul also commanded people to work so as not to live in idleness "If any one will not work, let him not eat" (2 Thess 3 10)

By work man not only provides sustenance for himself and his family, but contributes to *building the human society* In the words of *Gaudium et Spes* (n 35): "Just as human activity proceeds from man, so it is ordered towards man For when a man works he not only alters things and society, he develops himself as well Hence the norm of human activity is this· that in accord with the divine plan and will, it should harmonize with the genuine good of the human race, and allow people as individuals and as members of society to pursue their total vocation and fulfil it" (26).

This vision of work provides a key to evaluate *true progress.* Again in the words of the Council (G S , n 35)· "A person is more precious for what he is than for what he has Similarly, all that people do to obtain greater justice, wider brotherhood, and a more humane ordering of social relationships has greater worth than technical advances For these advances can supply the material for human progress but of themselves alone they can never actually bring it about" (26).

In the Christian perspective work has also a paschal dimension There is the aspect of *toil* in work The encyclical points out that in the Book of Genesis, "the original *blessing* of work contained in the very mystery of creation and connected with man's elevation as the image of God is contrasted with the *curse* that sin brought with it. This toil connected with work marks the way of human life on the earth and constitutes an announcement of death" (27)

But there is also the possibility of *sharing in the redemptive suffering of Christ* and thereby also in the *joy and fulfilment of the Resurrection* "In work, thanks to the light that penetrates us from the Resurrection of Christ, we always find a glimmer of new life, of the new good, as if it were an announcement of the 'new heavens and the new earth' (2 Pet 3 13, Rev 21 1) in which man and the world participate precisely through the toil that goes with work On the one hand this confirms the indispensability of the Cross in the spirituality of human work, on the other hand the Cross which this toil constitutes reveals a new good springing from work itself, from work understood in depth and in all its aspects and never apart from work" (27)

CBCI Statement on Caste

In recent months, there has been an increase in awareness of the problem of caste in the country, resulting from the spate of much-publicised reconversions and the atrocities such as in Deoli, Sadhupur and other places The Catholic Bishops' Conference of India, at its general meeting in Tiruchirapalli in January 1982, considered the question of caste and its baneful effects both on society at large as also within the Church

On the threshold of Independence, the people of India promulgated their charter of human rights enshrined in the Constitution of India, courageously pledging themselves to work for Liberty, Fraternity, Equality and Justice for all, without discrimination of caste or creed In full harmony with this national objective, the Church has been grappling with the problem of caste, paying special attention to the backward classes and striving to ameliorate their tragic condition and restore their human dignity The Resolutions of the All-India Seminar and periodical statements of the CBCI have consistently deplored the evils of caste The National Consultation of Christian leaders, organised in Bangalore in June 1978 by the CBCI, the Catholic Union of India (now called All India Catholic Union) and the National Christian Council of India, focussed attention in a special way on the plight of Christians of scheduled caste origin

Notwithstanding all these efforts, much yet remains to be done within the Church and outside, particularly in the eradication of what is known as the "caste mentality" which often finds expression in actions that are manifestly unchristian, and even infects in some areas the sphere of religious practices The tensions arising from the caste mentality are not confined to the oppression of the lower

caste by those of the higher castes but are also found within the castes themselves.

We state categorically that caste, with its consequent effects of discrimination and "caste mentality", has no place in Christianity It is, in fact, a denial of Christianity because it is inhuman It violates the God-given dignity and equality of the human person God created man in his own image and likeness He accepts and loves every human being without distinction He so loved the world that he sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, who became fully man and died to save all men "In Christ Jesus you are all sons of God . there is neither Jew or Greek, .neither slave nor free . .For you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3, 26-28) Thus, human dignity and respect are due to every person and any denial of this is a sin against God and man It is an outright denial of the Fatherhood of God which, in practice, renders meaningless the brotherhood of man

Catholics, in particular, are called to reflect on whether they can meaningfully participate in the Eucharist without repudiating and seriously striving to root out caste prejudices and similar traditions and sentiments, both within the Church and outside It is intolerable that caste should be a determining factor in membership of pastoral or parish councils and other Church associations, and even worse, in ecclesiastical appointments and posts of responsibility in religious Congregations

No National Consultation referred to above has made some concrete suggestions relating particularly to those belonging to the backward classes, v g , removal of all forms of segregation, greater fraternising on a social level, and so on Special provision, perhaps on a priority and guaranteed basis, should also be made for them in the matter of admissions to educational institutions, where particular attention should be paid to them, through remedial and coaching classes, if necessary

Caritas India, which has already opted in favour of projects to assist the backward classes, is urged to step up its programmes in this line so as to remedy the helplessness resulting from economic, social and other causes In all cases, our efforts must be directed towards removing the sense of inferiority under which they have been labouring for centuries and towards strengthening their feeling of being free citizens of India

In particular we call upon pastors and religious superiors to provide positive encouragement towards the promotion of vocations from the backward classes to the priesthood and the religious life

We appreciate the efforts of government for the emancipation of scheduled castes We share the concern of national leaders for the protection of the harijans and backward classes from the type of atrocities recently perpetrated upon them in various places. However, we strongly urge the central and state governments to put an end to the continued discrimination against Christians of scheduled caste origin in the matter of reservations, scholarships and job opportunities.

We observe with satisfaction the recent developments among our Hindu brethren to work more fully towards the integration into society of members of the scheduled castes It is a religious pre-occupation we all share and gives us a fruitful field for inter-religious collaboration In fact, the Church joins hands with all men and women of goodwill in the country who are committed to this same task and whose number is growing In particular, our clergy and religious, as also diocesan service societies, should endeavour to provide the necessary assistance so that weaker sections of the people may be able to avail themselves of the many benefits provided by law for their upliftment

The issue of caste and its consequent evil effects is not a peripheral one for the Church or, indeed, for society at large. Delay in facing it — or sometimes even a refusal to do so — is more than a question of human rights It is a betrayal of the Christian vocation We can no longer watch complacently while millions of our brothers and sisters are denied the rights that flow from their dignity as human beings and children of God

Note

Re-Structuring of CBCI Activities

The CBCI General Body Meeting which met in Tiruchirapally, January 5-14, 1982, discussed and approved a proposal for restructuring CBCI activities, presented to them by a special sub-committee The re-structuring directly concerns the CBCI Commissions

As over the years the number of concerns of national importance has been growing, the CBCI Commissions were now 18 in number, to which 2 Committees were also added The Commissions were as follows Bible, Catechetics, Clergy, Development-Justice-Peace, Dialogue, Ecumenism, Education, Evangelization, Family, Health Services, Labour, Laity, Liturgy, Seminaries, Social Communications, Theology, Vocations, Youth The two Committees were the CBCI-CRI Joint Committee, and the CBCI-CUI Joint Committee for Harijan Welfare

This complex and somewhat unwieldy structure called for some re-centring of activities around major concerns' The main reasons put forward in favour of a new structure were the following the new emphasis placed on the Regional Councils of Bishops and, ensuing from it, an increasing self-reliance at regional level, the interaction between various areas of concern and the consequent need for better coordination of the work done so far by various Commissions, greater attention to be given to the main concerns of the Church, reducing the financial strain imposed on the CBCI by the proliferation of Commissions, reducing the size of the CBCI Standing Committee which has grown in proportion with the number of Commissions In the mind of the special sub-committee that prepared it, the proposal put forward to the CBCI amounts to "a *new* structure and should not therefore be considered merely as a regrouping of the structures presently existing"

The new structure, now approved by the CBCI General Body, centres all activities of the CBCI around evangelization "which is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church" (*EN*, n 15) Evangelization is, of course, understood in the broad sense propounded by Pope Paul VI in the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* Hence five major areas of concern are identified, each of which gives birth to a new National Commission Each of these regroups several previous CBCI Commissions Each has a chairman, a vice-chairman, and a full-time secretary Membership in each of the new Commissions consists of one representative each from the Regional Councils of Bishops Adequate representation of all the regions of the country is thus ensured It is emphasised that thinking, planning and action in the various areas of concern is mainly done at the regional and diocesan level, by the Regional Councils of

Bishops and in the various dioceses The National Commissions are *to deal with those concerns which cannot be handled at regional or diocesan level and with areas which by their nature are of national importance*

The new National Commissions are the following:

1 ***Christian Life.*** The concern here is for the members of the Church itself, specifically for their Christian formation and instruction The Commission includes the areas of Bible, Catechetics, and Liturgy Chairman Archbishop Leonard D'SOUZA (Nagpur), Vice-Chairman Bishop Jacob ACHARUPARAMBIL (Trivandrum)

2 ***Proclamation of the Word.*** It is for reaching out to others, namely pesons of other faiths, or of no particular religious affiliation, even atheists, but also to Christians belonging to other Churches and Communities The Commission includes Evangelization, Dialogue, Ecumenism, and Communication Media Chairman Bishop Michael B DURAISAMY (Salem), Vice-Chairman Archbishop Hubert D'ROSARIO (Shillong-Gauhati)

3 ***Justice and Development.*** The concern represented is" for the World, the theatre of the Church's activity" The Commission includes the former Commissions for Development-Justice-Peace, Labour, Education and Health, within its field of activity also comes Harijan Welfare for which a Joint Committee had previously been created Chairman Bishop Cecil DE SA (Lucknow), Vice-Chairman: Bishop Arul Das JAMES (Ootacamund)

4 ***Clergy and Religious.*** Here is expressed the special concern for the "workers for evangelization", i e , for the ecclesiastical personnel This new Commission covers the areas of Clergy, Seminaries, Theology,Vocations, Religious Chairman Bishop Valerian D'SOUZA (Poona), Vice-Chairman Bishop Anthony THANNIKOT (Verapoly)

NOTE Though the Religious (for whom there was no special Commission in the previous structure) are included among the areas of concern of this Commission, the CBCI-CRI Joint Committee remains in existence as a separate body This is "in view of the particular importance of Religious in the life of the Church" and in order that collaboration between Major Superiors of Religious and the CBCI may continue to be fostered in the spirit of the recent Roman Directives for Mutual Relations between Bishops and Religious in the Church.

5 ***Laity.*** This last Commission gives expression to the CBCI concern for lay people whose rightful place in the life and mission of the Church needs to be fostered It includes the former Commissions for Laity, Youth, and Family Chairman Bishop Patrick D'SOUZA (Varanasi), Vice-Chairman Bishop Ambrose YEDDANAPALLI (Bellary).

J DUPUIS, S.J.

Book Reviews

Sacred Scripture

The Lord's Prayer and Jewish Liturgy. Edited by Jakob J. PETUCHOWSKI and Michael BROCKE *London, Burns and Oates*, 1978 Pp x-224 (No price given)

In November 1973 the Oratio Dominica Foundation held its first international and interdenominational conference in Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany The theme of the conference was the Our Father The following year the proceedings of the conference were published under the (German) title "The Our Father — Common Elements in Jewish and Christian Prayer" The present volume incorporates much of the original edition, other articles written explicitly for the English edition or previously published elsewhere have been inserted The work is concerned with the setting of the Lord's Prayer This setting presupposes the faith of biblical Israel and familiarity with its literary heritage The book consists of four parts

In Part One A Deissler examines the spirit of the Lord's prayer in the faith and worship of the O T

Part Two gives an excellent exposition by four Jewish scholars of the prayers of the Synagogue We have here a selection of the Rabbinical period the Eighteen Benedictions, the Kaddish (Holy) Prayer, the invocations "Our Father, Our King", and private prayers taught by various masters to groups of disciples J Heinemann concludes that "there can be no doubt that the Prayer of Jesus in Matt 6 9 displays all the characteristics of Jewish private prayer (Jesus) prefers a simple prayer conforming to the tradition of popular private prayer" (pp 88f) Synagogal prayer had a greater influence upon the people than the prayers used in the Temple-service If we take into account the fact that Jesus and his disciples were frequenting the Synagogue from their earliest years we shall easily realize that these formulas must have had an influence upon their prayer later as well

In Part Three Christian scholars examine the Lord's prayer itself, its original language, its structure, some controversial interpretations and theological implications Here A Vogtle's study, entitled "The Lord's Prayer a Prayer for Jews and Christians?", must be noted both with regard to content and presentation He briefly considers the original form of the prayer, its parallels with the synagogal prayer, and some old as well as new 'overinterpretations', more particularly of the petition for bread He proposes an interesting interpretation of the three We-petitions which he considers as three petitions for deliverance from three obstacles to attain salvation, viz preoccupation and care for earthly possessions, past sins, and danger of temptation He stresses the ecumenical value of the prayer because it is characterized by a total absence of Christological references and is entirely addressed to God who is our Father, whom Jews and Christians acknowledge together

Part Four considers some practical applications, mainly of a pastoral nature J Bommer notes that the Lord's Prayer which we all know from childhood onwards is not a prayer for children but needs "catechesis and a more profound theological proclamation by way of expounding" it (p 163) He warns against a far too habitual recitation of the Lord's Prayer, this "should be supplemented by deepening meditations on it" (p 167) He further deals with some difficulties arising out of the content of the prayer Some of those are touched upon also by A Vogtle and W Strolz in their respective articles The idea of praying for the end of the world and the coming of an other-worldly kingdom is no longer to the taste of modern man Neither is the idea of God as father when he seems to be either indifferent towards human suffering or unable to prevent it "All these and similar misunderstandings can be countered only with an always new, carefully and theologically accountable exposition of the Lord's Prayer, and more difficult hermeneutical problems must not be skirted here The Lord's Prayer can continue to be used in pastoral work only if we are permitted to reinterpret it continually, to explain it in accordance with the prevailing new life situation" (pp 165f) The introduction to the volume refers to the same point, broadening the question "'Meaning' in

religious texts is not only a question of what those texts originally meant. The situation in which the interpreter of those texts finds himself and the needs which he is trying to meet with his exegesis create another dimension of meaning' which is of religious significance. Under the circumstances, the reader must be prepared to encounter in this volume a variety of different interpretations, and not only of phrases within the Lord's Prayer. No attempt has been made here to harmonize those differences' (p viii)

M Brocke, co-editor, closes the volume with a selected reading list "designed to point the way in this immense and practically uncharted area for the reader who wants to inquire beyond the limits of the Lord's Prayer into the liturgy of Judaism and its influence on Christian liturgy" (p 206)

This is a valuable book, though at times perhaps a little heavy. For the English edition the bibliography might usefully have been complemented with more English works. However, one gladly overlooks these minor deficiencies.

J VOLCKAERT, S J

Men and Movements in the Primitive Church By F F BRUCE. *Exeter, The Paternoster Press*, 1979 Pp 159 £ 3

The sub-title of the book reads Studies in Early Non-Pauline Christianity. The writings of Paul are our earliest NT documents. They supply our earliest source-material for the life of early Christianity, both Pauline and non-Pauline. Later information however, found in the rest of the NT especially in Acts, is important, even indispensable, for the study of the early Pauline Christianity, as Prof Bruce, a confessed Paulinist, emphasizes.

These four lectures are centred on four groups of non-Pauline churches, they are focussed more particularly on the leaders of the churches. 1 Peter and the Eleven 2 Stephen and other Hellenists 3 James and the Church of Jerusalem 4 John and his circle.

The essays written at the level of the general reader may not explore new ground, they keep their value, however, from the fact that the author knows how to bring home what he has to say, and because he helps the reader to sharpen his attention on what the text exactly expresses. Here and there we find some interesting observations, as, v g the remark made already by Tertullian, that in the confrontation between Peter and Paul at Antioch, both men were concerned for the weaker brethren "*The trouble was that Peter's concern for the weaker brethren at Jerusalem conflicted with Paul's concern for the Gentile brethren in Antioch*" (p 36). Reflecting on Peter's wider ministry, the author remarks that "a Paulinist is under a constant temptation to underestimate Peter". Reacting against that tendency, Bruce for his part agrees with Duncan (in *Unity and Diversity in the NT*, p 385) "Peter was probably in fact and effect the bridgeman who did more than any other to hold together the diversity of first-century Christianity" (p 43)

The main interest of the book lies in the identification of "the men" and their "movements" or variations in the life of the early Church, a point which remains continually relevant in the Church.

J VOLCKAERT, S J

Fundamental Theology

Theology on Dover Beach. By NICHOLAS LASH. *London, Darton, Longman and Todd*, 1979 Pp xx-187 £ 3 95 (Available from Examiner Press Bookshop, 35 Dalal Street, Bombay 400023)

The book contains a collection of articles by the first Catholic Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge. The collection has a clear thematic unity as all the topics treated belong to Fundamental Theology. Thus we have the meaning of experience and the relation of the worldly to the Christian experience, the nature of theology, less as articulation of the faith than as its critical assessment (theology "consists not so much in confirming as rather in disturbing Church proclamation as it meets it in its concrete forms to date", quoted from K Barth, p 13), the dependence of theology upon faith and therefore praxis, the nature of truth as something that must be received as a gift rather than clung to as personal or group possession, the relation of Christianity to the historical and the consequent rejection of a a-historical theology, the polarity God-Christ and the risk of faith, the objectivity of faith that cannot be dissociated from the subject, the whole problematic of verification-falsification so dear to British philosophy. All these and other areas the author explores with competence and honesty. The last essay treats a perhaps less fundamental but nevertheless important question-eschatology. It contains a helpful philosophical reflection on the relation of time to eternity. Yet I think that a deeper look at the meaning of "duration"

as a form of existence would confirm some points which are here challenged by Lash, and invalidate the parallel he draws between the 'after-life' and a 'pre-existence' of persons The book *will be welcome by theologians, it is a* model of the kind of theological thinking we need today

G GISPERT-SAUCH, S J

A Long Way From Home. A Sociological Exploration of Contemporary Idolatry By J A WALTER *Exeter, The Paternoster Press*, 1979 Pp 217 £ 4 20

This book is written from the points of view of both sociology and theology Against the usual perception that our culture is becoming more a-religious, more secularised, the author provocatively affirms that "sociologically speaking, the sacred today is a fact, theologically speaking, it is to be deplored" (p 198) This the author shows by studying what are for modern society the sources of meaning and the objects of "worship", i e, of ultimate commitment He lines up an impressive and oddly variegated series of idols work, the family, the suburban home, individualism, ecology, racism, etc' Contemporary middle-class Anglo-American people (the real object of this study) tend to find the meaning for their life in one or several of these institutions or ideologies Desacralization, instead of making man free, leads to new idols Only the worship of God alone, the transcendent God of the Bible, can relativise all things and generate freedom The thesis raises two questions in my mind The first is sociological Are this-worldly objectives, such as the nuclear family or the classless society or simply a clean environment (why not also sports, or art, etc ?), rightly called "sacred" or made into "idols", merely because they are pursued by man as sources of meaning for his life? Is not the dimension of transcendence, of other-than-the-immediate, an integral dimension of "the sacred"? The danger is real of so enlarging the meaning of words as to make dialogue between sciences and cultures meaningless The result would be that a new vocabulary needs to be created to express what devalued words originally meant My second question is theological Is the stand of the author based on the New or on the Old Testament? Is it Christian, or is it Jewish (or perhaps Islamic)? For him "the radical monotheism of Christianity" (p 201) can never legitimize human *institutions — it only judges and consequently relativises them This may be time But what is the significance of the* Incarnation? Where is the place of God's Kingdom, if not here on earth? *Is not the author's starting point too* Barthian? The fact that it raises questions shows that the book is worth reading It also provides much information from sociology, not necessarily analytical sociology, but the kind that evaluates the general trends of "modern" (i e , Western) society

G GISPERT-SAUCH, S J

Expertene of the Sptrit

Breath of Fire. By Samuel RAYAN, *London, Geoffiev Chapman*, 1979 Pp vii-148 (No price given)

This is the English edition of a book published in 1978 by Orbis, Maryknoll, USA, under the title *The Holy Spirit Heart of the Gospel and Christian Hope* The book contains twelve meditations on the Holy Spirit which formed the heart of a retreat given to the Maryknoll sisters It is deeply spiritual and therefore theological The meditations spring from the awareness that "the experience of the Holy Spirit was *the* great Christian experience" from the beginning (p 1) They are based on the Biblical teaching on the Holy Spirit, but Fr Rayan's special contribution is to make the Biblical insights alive and relevant to the world of today, with its miseries and hopes, its aspirations and frustrations The *meditations keep throughout* a liberationist perspective, the awareness that the Kingdom of God has to be served here and now in a new society The book may serve as a corrective to forms of spirituality wherein the Holy Spirit becomes easily a substitute for the political commitment to which we are called Fr Rayan insists on the primacy of life over structures, of experience over theology He is rightly critical of the enslaving trends found both in political and religious societies But what is perhaps most enriching in the meditations is the way in which the author opens up the significance and meaning for today *of so many biblical and life symbols* which through familiarity have often become stale for us He says "We begin to see things as symbols only when the poet points them out to us, and then we are surprised that we missed the obvious before the depths hidden in a blade of grass, in a sunrise or a sunset, in springtime, in a look, in a

picture, in an event It is the poet that makes us sensitive to new dimensions and lends wings to our thoughts, things and events have meanings to which only the poet can awaken us" (p. 110). In these meditations Fr Rayan himself is a poet

G GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

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JOURNAL OF THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

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In This Issue

Our last issue carried a report of the Fifth Conference of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT) which took place in New Delhi last August; the final Document issued by the Conference was published in our February issue The present and the next number of VIDYAJYOTI offer, in two instalments, the position paper delivered at the Conference by Fr Aloysius PIERIS on "The Place of Non-Christian Religions and Cultures in the Evolution of a Third World Theology" The paper shows what a specifically Asian model of liberation theology would have to be Fr Pieris does not hide his disagreement with the liberationist thesis on religion propounded by many Latin Americans; nor is he fully convinced by the Inculturation approach followed by African liberationists. In Asia liberation theology must combine the social, the cultural and the religious. There is need for a theology of religions for the Third world; this is what the paper means to offer.

Though coming from a quite different source and background, the second article in this issue is not unrelated to the question posed by the first writer; nor is it without bearing on the Third World and Asia. Fr Thomas M. GANNON, an American Sociologist, studies the interplay between Religious and Social Change. More specifically he asks what impact the process of secularisation makes on development, and what chances there are for religious values and traditions to continue to influence human relations in modern societies Religion, he observes, is a constitutive element of human community, a core institution. If it needs to adapt to the contemporary societal process, it remains a mediating structure capable of influencing the shape of society.

"Evangelisation through Commitment", a short piece by Fr J.T MATHEIKAL, asks what is implied in following Jesus in his preferential option for the poor and the oppressed. His commitment to them was total; it constitutes the "agenda for the disciples" But we are often left to wonder how genuine our identification with the poor is or even can be. The author remarks that Jesus himself remained different from those with whom he identified. But his was a pro-existence, and so must ours be.

Fr N. SHETH investigates the meaning in the Hindu Bhakti tradition of an apparently strange concept of salvation-liberation. salvation through the hatred of Krishna.

Non-Christian Religions and Cultures in Third World Theology

Aloysius PIERIS, S J

Part I

THEOLOGY OF RELIGIONS CURRENT BOUNDARIES OF ORTHODOXY

I. *The Basis and Background: Third World as a Theological Perspective*

THE phrase *Third World* is a theological neologism for God's own people It stands for the *starving sons of Jacob* — of all places and of all times — *who go in search of bread to a rich country only to become its slaves* In other words, the "Third World" is not merely the story of the South in relation to the North or of the East in relation to the West It is something that happens wherever and whenever socio-economic dependence in terms of *race*, *class* or *sex* generates political and cultural slavery, fermenting thereby a new peoplehood. Since, however, there is no people unless summoned by God, and no God worth talking about unless that God speaks through a People, all theology is about a *People*'s *God*, that is to say, about *God's people* The major focus of all "God-talk" or Theology, then, must be the Third World's irruption as a new peoplehood announcing the liberating presence of a God who claims to humanize this cruel world But the irruption of the Third World is also the irruption of the non-Christian world The vast majority of God's poor perceive their ultimate concern and symbolize their struggle for liberation only in the idiom of non-Christian *religions and cultures*. Therefore, a theology that does not speak *to* or speak *through* this non-Christian peoplehood is an esoteric luxury of a Christian minority Hence we need a theology of religions that expands the existing boundaries of orthodoxy in the very process of entering into the liberative streams of other religions and cultures.

One regrets, therefore, that the only brand of Third World theology now in vogue is circumscribed by the exclusively Latin and

Christian context of its origin. This remark is not levelled against the Latin American model as such but at the antithetical attitudes it has evoked in the Afro-Asian churches, in that the "liberationists" *re-duplicate this model in their non-Latin and non-Christian environments* thus driving the "inculturationists" to a defensive extreme.

In fact, at the EATWOT's Asian consultation (1979),[1] I forestalled this futile debate by avoiding the Liberation-Inculturation schema and by defining theology as a discovery rather than an invention, i e , as a Christian participation in and a Christic explicitation of all that happens at the deepest zone of the Asian ethos wherein *religiosity* and *poverty*, each in its liberative dimension, coalesce to forge a common front against Mammon, the Anti-God [2] Nevertheless, the subsequent controversy relapsed into the old paradigm and reduced religiosity and poverty to the categories of inculturation and liberation respectively,[3] though efforts were made to restore the original framework wherein the *cultural* context of theology was equated with the *liberative* dimension of religiousness and poverty [4]

The polarization continues to this day The reason, presumably, is that in both the First and the Third Worlds, there still lurks a crypto-colonialist theology of religions (and cultures) which keeps our revolutionary rhetoric from resonating in the hearts of the Third World's non-Christian majority Is this not the appropriate time and the place to discuss it frankly ?

Our analysis of this question presumes that every religion, Christianity included, is at once a sign and counter-sign of the kingdom; that the revolutionary impetus launching a religion into existence is both fettered and fostered by the need for an ideological formulation; that its institutionalization both constrains and conserves its liberative force, that religion, therefore, is a potential means of either emancipation or enslavement

But, theologically speaking, which is to say, "from a Third World perspective", the test-case that reveals the twin aspect of sin and grace in religion is its response to the phenomenon of *poverty* which is itself ambivalent, it could mean dispossession forced upon the

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1 About which cf Virginia FABELLA (ed), *Asia's Struggle for Full Humanity*, Orbis Books, New York, 1980

2 Aloysius PIERIS, "Towards an Asian Theology of Liberation Some Religio-Cultural Guidelines", ibid , pp 75-95, *passim* This paper is also found in VIDYAJYOTI 1979, pp 261-284

3 Some aspects of the controversy can be read in *Voices from the Third World*, 2/1 (June, 1979) Cf also V FABELLA, op cit , pp 10, 11, 165, 186

4 See A PIERIS, "The Dynamics of the ATC A Reply to Paul Caspersz", *Voices from the Third World*, 2/1 (June, 1979, pp. 23-28.

masses by the hedonism and the acquisitiveness of the greedy, while it also means the virtue of poverty which, according to Albert Tevoedjre's thesis,[5] *is "the status of someone having what is necessary and not the surplus"*, a *conditio sine qua non* for the elimination of what we have defined here as enforced poverty A religion fails in its salvific mission even if it only connives at the sinful dimension of poverty It is salutary if it zealously promotes the liberating virtue of voluntary poverty both as a personal choice (the monastic praxis) and as a political system (the socialist praxis) For, depending on its bearing on the problem of poverty, religion either serves or starves humankind not only in the micro-ethical sphere of the individual soul, but in the macro-ethical world of politics and economics

We grant that this criterion is not universally accepted, nor is the ambivalence of the religious phenomenon comprehensively spelt out in theological circles Thus, a certain unilateral view of religions still prevails and accounts for the polarization of the Church into a Christ-*against*-religions-theology and a Christ-*of*-religions-theology The rift between liberationists and inculturationists is only a recent manifestation of it, as there have been other versions earlier as indicated in our diagram below

II. *The Liberationist Thesis on Religion: Its Western and Colonialist Character*

The contrast between these two perspectives (Christ-*against*-religions and Christ-*of*-religions) is quite evident even in the Latin American Theologies But, on the whole, perceptive pioneers like Gustavo Gutierrez and nuanced systematizers like Juan Luis Segundo have always viewed religion as an ambivalent phenomenon At the recent Sao Paolo Conference of the EATWOT,[6] both the enslaving and the liberating dimensions of religion (i e , Christianity) have been recognized![7] Gutierrez contrasted "popular religiosity" with "liberative faith"[8] Dussel therefore called for a new theory of religion[9] However, there still prevails a species of *Christ-against-religions* theology in Latin America, which is uncritically accepted in small but vocal circles of Asian activities That there are two major trends in Libe-

5 Albert TEVOEDJRE, *Poverty, Wealth of Nations* (Oxford 1978), being a rejoinder to Adam SMITH's *Wealth of Nations*

6 About which cf Sergio TORRES and John EAGLESTON (eds), *The Challenge of Basic Communities*, Orbis Books, New York, 1981

7 E g LUIS A GOMEZ DE SOUZA, "Structures and Mechanisms of Domination in Capitalism", ibid , p 16

8 G GUTIERREZ, "Irruption of the Poor in Latin America and the Christian Communities of the Common People", ibid , pp 113, 114.

9. E DUSSEL, "Current Events in Latin America (1972-1980)", ibid , pp. 100, 101.

ration Theology — one whose mood and method is Marxist and the other which is pastorally rooted in the populist cultures[10] — is perhaps not sufficiently appreciated here in Asia While I personally assess both these theologies to be basically valid, I feel compelled to question the unilateral theory of religion presupposed in the former.

The best exponent of this theory is José Miranda, a Latin American Biblicist avidly read in Asia For him religion is an evil to be destroyed, because it is an escapist objectification of the Absolute, a projection of one's own self, a justification of the *status quo*, a total alienation of the human person, an *alibi* for interpersonal justice, a cyclic view of life that stifles the voice of the Absolute in suffering humanity — and, therefore, something that negates the Christian commitment.[11] Even the more sober Jon Sobrino speaks in the same strain, taking religion to be a degradation of Faith [12]

This theory is certainly not of Latin American creation As we shall indicate later, it is a blend of two European patterns of thought dating back to an era when the West was less informed than now about the complex structure and history of non-Christian cultures. How surprising that liberation-conscious Asians should subscribe to this thesis which is as colonialist as it is Western ![13]

Why is it Western, why colonialist ?

It is Western, first because of the implied notion of 'religion' None of the Asian soteriologies, not excluding the Biblical ones, have offered us a comprehensive word for, or a clear concept of, 'religion' in the current Western sense Some vernacular words have no doubt acquired that meaning through usage under Western impact Earlier, we had words only for the various facets of what could be designated as religion For, in our context, religion is life itself rather than a function of it, being the all-pervasive ethos of human existence This is even more true of tribal religion which often overlaps with 'culture'.

In the West, the word *Religion* crept into the English language and, perhaps, into other modern languages as well, from the Vulgate which rendered the Greek *threskeia* with the Latin *religio* In James

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10 J C SCANNONE, "Theology, Popular Culture and Discernment", in R GEBELLINI (ed), *Frontiers of Theology in Latin America*, Orbis Books, New York' 1979, p 221

11 José MIRANDA, *Being and the Messiah The Message of St John*, Orbis Books, New York, 1977, pp 39-42 and *passim*

12 Jon SOBRINO, *Christology at the Crossroads*, Orbis Books, New York, 1978, pp 275ff

13 This trend is not restricted to the Philippines In the Indian Group that discussed my paper (cf n 2 above) in Bangalore immediately after the Asian Theological Consultation, many of the participants seem to have shared this conviction.

1:26ff, one hears of a 'pure religion', and in Acts 26·5 the word clearly refers to Judaism The Latin Apologists, unlike their Greek counterparts, spoke of a *vera religio* (meaning Christianity) in contrast with *falsa religio*, a conviction that grew aggressive due to conflicts with Judaism and Islam. Thus the classical Roman Missiology (Stages 1 & 2 in our diagram) had set Christ against *other* (i e , false) *religions* unlike some contemporary liberationists who have gone further and put Christ against *religion as such* (Stage 3). In this lies both the continuity and the contrast between the early and the modern versions of this conservative evangelism !

The narrow concepts of religion, as advocated by the liberationists, seems more Greek than Roman Most Greek Apologists were inclined to churn 'paganism' theologically and extract only its philosophy, throwing aside its religion as incompatible with Christianity The tendency to squeeze religion out of human existence (by way of sacralization and secularization, which are two sides of the same coin) is not alien to the Western tradition Schillebeeckx has cogently argued that even the modern phenomenon of secularization germinated under the sacred shadow of medieval cathedrals[14]

But the two forms in which this tendency influenced the liberationists' interpretation of religion appeared only within the last hundred years For the philosophical rejection of (the Christian) religion, characteristic of certain intellectual movements in Europe (Enlightenment, Scientific Revolution, Rationalism) found an ideological as well as a theological formulation in the two Karls of 'dialectical' fame Marx's dialectical materialism set religion against *revolution*, Barth's dialectical theology opposed it to *revelation* In their systems, religion was a major obstacle to liberation and salvation respectively.

In dismissing the Immanentist thesis coming down from Schleiermacher to Otto, a thesis that postulated a 'religious *a priori*' in the human person, Barth initiated an evangelistic theology that reduced the notion of religion to a blasphemous manipulation of God, or at least an attempt at it Thus the pioneering exegetical tradition of the Protestants — anterior to and stimulative of later Catholic Biblical scholarship — was seriously infected by this bias Kittel, for instance, referring to the conspicuous infrequency of words like *threskeia*, *deisidaimonia*, *eusebeia*, *theosebeia*, etc , in the New Testament,[15]

14 E SCHILLEBEECKX, *God, The Future of Man*, Sheed and Ward, Inc , New York, 1968, pp 57-58

15 Cf G KITTEL *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Michigan 1971, II, 20, s v *deisidaimonia*, III, 123-128, s v *theosebeia*, III, 155ff , s v *threskeia*, III, 175, s.v *eusebeia*

reaches the conclusion that the whole concept of 'religion' (obviously as understood in that particular theological tradition) is alien to the Bible and that, in the mother-tongue of the N.T. authors, there was no linguistic equivalent for these Greek terms[16] This last remark, as we already observed, is true of *all* oriental religions, and should have thrown a doubt on the very concept of religion employed here ! It is, therefore, hardly surprising that many a good Dictionary of Biblical Theology (cf Léon Dufour or Bauer) would have no column on 'religion' From 'Redemption' they pass on to 'Remnant'— indeed a symbolic saltus which suggests another possible concept of religion which one could extract from the Bible ! Regrettably, it is under the aforesaid category of 'religion' that all non-Christian soteriologies are subsumed and dismissed in favour of Biblical Faith

In the militant stream of Liberation Theology, this Barthian view of religion dovetails neatly with Karl Marx's equally evangelistic and Euro-centric evaluation of religions and cultures Though many a Latin American critic has succeeded in pushing the Marxian analysis to the opposite conclusion, namely, that religion could be a "leaven of liberation rather than an opiate",[17] it still requires an Asian sensitivity to monitor its *occidentalist* bias Marx, whose contribution to the liberation of Third World nations can never be under-estimated, does not, for that reason, cease to be a man of his own time and clime a 19th century European. A recent writer who revels in revealing the racial and class prejudices of Marx and Engels concludes as follows:

> Their attitudes were typical attitudes of the nineteenth century Europeans who, regardless of their ideology, thought in terms of a hierarchy of cultures with their own at the top and who occasionally used biology to provide a scientific basis for their categorization of societies into higher and lower forms[18]

The Italian Marxist theoretician, the late Lelio Basso, has acknowledged this deficiency with laudable frankness[19] Let me pick up a few of his well documented observations

In Marx's *Manifesto*, the whole idea of 'progress' and 'civilization' is simply equated with the Westernization of the East, the urbanization of the rural and the proletarization of the peasantry, all in the name of Socialism ! And in *The Capital*, the European form of capitalist

16 Ibid , III, 181.

17 Cf specially A PEREZ-ESCLARIN, *Atheism and Liberation*, Orbis Books, New York, 1978, pp 160-161

18 Diane PAUL, " 'In the Interest of Civilization' Marxist Views of Race and Culture in the Nineteenth Century", in *Journal of the History of Ideas* XLII/1 (January-March, 1981), pp 138-139.

19 Lelio BASSO, "La Via Non-Capitalistica al Socialismo", S AMIN et alii, *Imperialismo e Rivoluzione Socialista nel Terzo Mondo*, Franco Angeli Editore, Milan, 1979, pp 9-31.

industrialization is envisaged as the model for the rest of the world, an indispensable prelude to the proletarian revolution. For this reason, Engels rejoiced at the American aggression on Mexico and the subsequent annexation of rich provinces like California. He also hailed the French acquisition of Algeria — though he did have second thoughts about it Similarly, Marx welcomed the British conquest of India because the breakdown of the ancient Indian civilization followed preferably by *Europeanization* (*sic* !) seemed an indispensable condition for the building up of a modern Industrial culture. That there could, in fact, be a non-Western non-European way to Socialism culturally based on the peasant communes of the so-called *Obščina*, was, of course, proposed and debated at length even before the October Revolution; but Marx and especially Engels did not really shed their Western chauvinism in this regard

Lenin's post-revolutionary policies seem to have further entrenched this occidentalism in the orthodox stream of classical Marxism After gaining power he not only tried to expedite the industrialization of Russia (supposedly on a state basis rather than on a capitalist basis) but tried also to bring about socialism *from the top*, vertically, with little faith in the process of allowing it to emerge from the people below In "accelerating the historical process", as it is called, many extraneous elements had to be imposed on the people, with a good deal of violence to their religious and cultural sensitivities One should not forget that Lenin (perhaps influenced by Cernyševkij's ideal of *destroying the Asian character* of the Russian people — the *Aziatična* as it was called) introduced a steamroller Socialism which ruthlessly sought to level down the religious and cultural identities of people. The cry of proletarian *internationalism* — valid in itself — was in practice a zeal for *occidentalism* In this he excelled the Christian Missionaries of his time who preached a 'universal Gospel' which in reality was their own narrow ethnic version of it ! The Brezhnev Principle is a variation of this intransigent verticalism

It is true that Lenin made many theoretical concessions to other ways of socialism as verified, for instance, in the case of Mongolia, as modern Marxist apologists observe with pride[20] But, denying to the Founders of Marxism the right to be men of their own times, does not help Would that a massive effort be made to purge Marxism of its Euro-centricism and cultural colonialism ! It should revise its notion of Afro-Asian religions and cultures in terms of

20 E g, see "A Leap Across Centuries", (a team report on Mongolia on its 60th anniversary of Revolution), *World Marxist Review*, 24/1 (January 1981), pp. 49-54.

their liberative potentialities and discover indigenous ways to Socialism — a kind of *aggiornamento* inaugurated by Markov, Ernst and other Marxist intellectuals of the Leipzig School *vis-à-vis* the pre-capitalist societies of Africa [21] Such a corrective measure, moreover, has already been anticipated in the political praxis of Africans themselves Amilcar Cabral's "Marxism" is a case in point [22] One could also cite with some reservation Lumumba and Nkrumah Asia has Ho Chi Minh They wrote little and transmitted much to posterity through their praxis which, therefore, serves as a *locus theologicus* for those groping for "a liberation-theology of religions and cultures".

This Afro-Asian critique of Marxist occidentalism is also an implicit judgement on the militant stream of Latin American Theology which maintains a methodological continuity with Western Marxism and a cultural continuity with European Theology. Their Latin and Marxist idiom does not permit the ethnic identity of the racial minorities to be reflected in their theology The Amerindians, the Blacks and the Asiatics, almost a fifth of the South American population, are also absolute majorities in certain provinces [23] Has their unique community sense (e g , the Indian *confradias* which are alleged to be a rich cultural alternative to Latin *hermanidaes*)[24] made a visible impact on the ecclesiological revolution of basic communities ?[25] We agree with the Marxists that a conflict between the ethnic struggles and class struggles could jeopardise the total liberation of a People But this fear — if coupled with the former Marxist *tendency* to confuse internationalism with occidentalism — could be an excuse for reinforcing Latinism As a matter of fact, racism remains a contemporary problem, not a mere thing of the colonial past [26] Not surprisingly, even the Marxist Lipschutz, who conceded that these non-Latin ethnic groups could form self-governing 'linguistic' republics, would not think of the hypothetically Socialist Nation of Latin America except in Hispano-American terms, always having the Soviet model before him[27] — a model which is not entirely free of Russia's cultural and linguistic

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21 Cf Jean ZIEGLER, "Elementi di una teoria sulle società socialiste precapitaliste", in S AMIN et alii, op cit , p 42

22 Cf Patric CHABAL, "The Social and Political Thought of Amilcar Cabral · a Reassessment", *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 19/1 (March 1981), pp 31-56

23 P G CASANOVA, "Le Minoranze Etniche in America Latina dal sottoviluppo al socialismo", in S AMIN et alii, op cit , p 96

24 Cf John SWETNAM, "Class-based and Community based Ritual Organization in Latin America", *Ethnology* 17 (1978), 4, pp 425-438

25 At the CELAM's Cartagena encounter (July 1980), the Church was invited to study, defend and foster the Afro-American cultural values Cf *Misiones Estranjeras* 62-62 (May-June, 1981), p 217.

26 Cf R R BURGOA, "Clase Y Raza en los Andes", ibid , pp 269ff

27 P G. CASANOVA, art. cit , p. 118

CHRIST AND THE RELIGIONS

THE HISTORICAL PANORAMA OF A POLARIZATION

CHRIST-AGAINST-RELIGIONS		CHRIST-OF-RELIGIONS
(*16th C onwards*) The COLONIALIST CHRIST of early Western Missionaries conquers non-Christian religions which are tied up with the *moral poverty* of the "colonized" nations The medium of His action is the *Western* form of *civilization*	1	(*19th C onwards*) The GNOSTIC CHRIST of Indian Theologians beginning of the fulfillment theory of Religions The link between religion and material poverty ignored
(*late 60s*) The NEO-COLONIALIST CHRIST of the developmentalists conquers non-Christian religions which are tied up with the *material poverty* of the "developing" nations The medium of His action is the *Western* model of *development*	2	(*late 60s*) The ASHRAMIC CHRIST of monks and mystics incarnate through traditional practice of religious poverty - i e voluntary acceptance of material poverty ("Renunciation", Monasticism) The link between religion and structural poverty ignored
(*late 70s*) The CRYPTO-COLONIALIST CHRIST of the liberationists conquers non-Christian religions which are tied up with the *structural poverty* of the third-world' nations The medium of His action is the *structural liberation* based on the Marxist Occidentalism and *Western Biblicism*	3	(*late 70s*) The UNIVERSAL CHRIST of the Inculturationists particularized in cultures through the appropriation of religious structures (idioms, symbols, moods, etc) The link between religion and liberation-struggles ignored

colonialism.[28] It is, therefore, heartening to note that the participants of the Sao Paolo Conference did touch on this delicate question,[29] though in the Final Document they skirted the subject with only a passing nod.[30]

III. *Liberation and Inculturation: The History of a Tension*

Some theologians display an exaggerated solicitude for Inculturation, which calls for an equally severe judgement specially when the historical context of the liberation-inculturation tension is brought into focus Our diagram does precisely this by tabulating the three successive versions of the two Christological perspectives the "Christ-*against*-religions theology" and the "Christ-*of*-religions theology". As this diagram is self-explanatory, we shall only skim over the three periods, touching down only on salient points

Phase One covers the era of Euro-Ecclesiastical expansionism when the colonialist Christ was set on a warring spree against false religions in the lands now called the Third World Not even De Nobili and Ricci contested this 'Christ-*against*-religions' Theology ! They only questioned the policy of imposing Western civilization as a means of conversion, a policy that prevailed despite their protest, and persists to this day in subtle ways (Phases 2 and 3) The theological break-through began perhaps in the 19th century with the epiphany of the Gnostic Christ He appeared in the works of both Hindu and Christian theologians[31] Some of the latter already anticipated the later official doctrine of the Lambeth Conference (1930) and the Second Vatican Council, namely, that Christ works in other religions as the final consummation of all human aspiration for Redemption Obviously this "fulfilment theory of religions", even in its post-Vatican II versions, is fraught with intrinsic theological difficulties that need not be discussed here Suffice it to note that it is an abstract theory which excludes from religious discourse the basic theme of any genuine theology. the *poor* After all, is not the story of Jesus pre-eminently the story of a God-*of*-the-poor, a God-*with*-the-poor and a God-*for*-the-poor ? No wonder that in the sixties, with the sharpening of Third World consciousness, the nexus between the *religions and the poor* began to receive articulate attention.

28 Soviets are accused of Russifying and Westernizing the Asians in USSR But *Soviet apologetics does not fully answer these charges Cf* e g , Z S CHERTINA, "The Bourgeois Theory of Modernization and the Real Development of the Peoples of Soviet Central Asia", *The Soviet Review* XXII/2, Summer 1981, pp 77, 78

29. S TORRES and J. EAGLESTON, op cit , 5, pp 15-16, 42-45, etc

30 Ibid , p 234

31 For an extensive treatment of these "Indian Christologies", cf M M THOMAS, *The Acknowledged Christ of Indian Renaissance*, SCM, London, 1969, and S J SAMARTHA, *The Hindu Response to the Unbound Christ*, CLS, Madras, 1974

Thus begins Phase Two, with its own version of the two theological perspectives. Enters first the Neo-Colonialist Christ, brandishing his emblem: the Missionary with the jeep Western 'civilization' now yields place to Western 'development' as the medium of his saving presence I even recall it being called pre-evangelization! How can other religions relieve the poor of their plight, since these religions themselves are the partial cause of their under-development, and since technology and progress are unique Christian achievements destined to free the non-Christian masses from their superstitious traditions?[32] That the non-Christian world-view could provide a saner philosophy of development,[33] as illustrated for instance by the Sarvodaya Movement in its earlier phase, or that, in the process of 'modernization', the 'evangelical' values of other religions and cultures were being immolated on the altar of Mammon, were still the opinions of a dissenting minority[34]

A counter-thesis to developmentalism, however, did come from the Christ-of-religions theology which found its anchor in the numerous Ashrams and their equivalents already existing for decades They embodied the spirit of renunciation central to many cultures, thus expressing their solidarity both with the *poor* and with their *religions* Material progress need not necessarily mean human development nor is material poverty in itself a human impoverishment The Ashramic Christ fought neither of these His sole attack was on that which caused such polarity greed, the demon *within* and enemy of all authentic spirituality

And there was the rub The organized character of greed passed unnoticed. While the war was waged and even won *within* the walls of Ashrams, the poor — the waste product of the earth's capital-accumulating plutocracy — continues to grow in number and misery Could their struggle for sheer survival succeed if that sinful system is not its target? Unless stained by the stigma of solidarity with that struggle, monastic poverty will always remain a shallow status-symbol of a client-gathering Guru. The claim to have renounced wealth

32 The most popular statement of this thesis at the time was A Th VAN LEEUWEN, *Christianity in World History The Meeting of Faiths of East and West*, Edinburgh House Press, London, 1964. It is taken up also by P GHEDDO, *Why is the Third World Poor?* Orbis Books, New York, 1973, specially pp 30-37 and *passim*

33 Cf the chapter on "Buddhist Economics" in E F SCHUMACHER, *Small is Beautiful Economics as if People Mattered*, London, 1973, New York, Harper & Row, 1973 Also see K ISHWARAN, "*Bhakti* Tradition and Modernization The Case of *Lingayatism*", *The Journal of Asian and African Studies*, XV/1-2 (1980), pp 72-82

34 A delicate and comprehensive critique, representative of this period is: Denis GOULET, "On the Goals of Development", *Cross Currents* 18 (February 1968), pp. 387-405.

is vanity of vanities if those who have no wealth to renounce cannot benefit from it There is already a precedent in Jesus, in his precursor John, and in Gandhi, his Hindu admirer, for whom voluntary poverty was not only a renunciation of Mammon in the micro-ethical sphere of one's soul, but a denunciation of Its stooges in the macro-ethical order of religio-political institutions.

It is sad that while yesterday's feudalism turned some monasteries into oases of plenty in deserts of poverty, pushing them into the hands of today's revolutionaries who *force* monks to practise *voluntary* poverty for the benefit of the masses (as it happened in Tibet and Mongolia), today's capitalism has entrenched some Ashrams, Zendos and Prayer-Centres in the grip of wealth-accumulating patrons who frequent them for spells of tranquillity and return unconverted and unrepentant, awaiting another revolution to disrupt that unholy alliance with Mammon Have we not also heard of mystics spinning dollars by exporting meditation to the West ? Like rubber, coffee and copper, our 'spirituality' too gets processed in the West and returns expensive — with sophisticated labels ("Transcendental Meditation") to be consumed locally ! Who is the beneficiary ? And what of the horror of caste and sex discrimination which thrives on religious sanction ? How many prayer-centres have cared or dared to go against the grain ? The Ashramic Christ seemed no more sensitive than the Neo-Colonialist Christ to the demands of justice

It is, therefore, worth noting that Phase Three dawned during a period when the pendulum of politics poised for a brief passing moment on the left extremity before it began its present rightward swing with the massive crisis in the Socialist States and the rise of Reaganism Disappointment with doctrinaire theologies and disillusion with both 'developmentalism' and 'mysticism' of the previous era added fuel to the fire of mounting liberation fever in the expanding circles of Christian activists in our part of the world It was at this time that the Latin American theology (equated here with Liberation Theology), already with ten years of maturity behind it, began to awaken the Afro-Asian 'indigenizers' from their ethnocentric stupor just as it had earlier shocked the Euro-American theoreticians from dogmatic slumber It is understandable that some Asian theologians with leftist leanings began to sing the liberation song out of beat with the non-Latin rhythm of their own cultures. The 'Lord of the Dance' was the Liberator Christ who redeemed the poor not only of their poverty but also of their traditional religions which sustained the sinful systems. It is therefore equally understandable that the Incarnate Christ of the Inculturationists stood aghast on the opposite pole !

Just as one particular stream of Liberation Theology pursues, even today, the colonial evangelism of the past, as was shown in Section 2 above, so also the bulk of literature produced in today's ever proliferating seminars on 'inculturation' does not show any significant departure from the previous era's narrow focus on religion and culture, scant attention being paid to the colossal scandal of institutionalized misery which poses a challenge to every religion A defensive posture adopted against the liberationist thesis may partly explain such blindness. The implications of this limitation are serious and I have spelt them out clearly elsewhere[35] Nevertheless, we shall resume this discussion in Part Two of this paper after dealing with the liberative and revolutionary potentials of non-Christian religions—something that both the liberationists (the brand that we are criticizing here) and the inculturationists have failed to discern, but which is the very texture of a '*Third-World Theology of Religions*'

(*to be continued*)

35 In my paper "The Mission of the Local Church and the Major Religious Traditions", presented at the *Sedos Seminar, Rome, March* 1981, to be released shortly by Orbis Books, New York.

Religious and Social Change

The Impact of Secularization on Development

· Thomas M. GANNON, S J *

MY inten ion in this paper is to examine the interplay between religious and social change The issues involved in this relationship are both difficult and complex In fact, of all the dimensions of the uncertain changes now underway in both developed and developing nations, surely the most difficult to grasp is the religious The difficulty and complexity arise from several sources

In any concrete historical situation, religion usually interweaves with other social factors, so it is not easy to isolate its effect in any specific chain of events Or when one speaks of different aspects of religion that either promote or inhibit social change, it also must be recognized that, in most situations, both processes are occurring simultaneously.

Even more critical is the fact that religious influence is not measureable as, however inexactly, economic change is Nor, for the most part, is religious change illuminated by the kind of explosions that mark political development assassinations, *coups d'état*, border wars, riots, and here and there an election Such proven indices of change in social life as urbanization, solidification of class loyalties, or the emergence of a more complex occupational system are, if not entirely lacking, certainly rarer and considerably more equivocal in the religious sphere With religion, old wine more easily goes into new bottles, just as old bottles more easily contain new wine Not only is it very difficult to discover the ways in which religion affects or is affected by changes elsewhere in society; it is even more difficult to discover the way in which the shape of religious experience itself is changing, or if it is changing at all It is not even clear what sorts of things one ought to look at in order to find out

The systematic social analysis of religion has always been plagued by this particular embarrassment· the elusiveness of its subject matter

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The problem, as Clifford Geertz has pointed out, is not one of constructing new definitions of religion[1] We have had quite enough of those, and their very number is a symptom of the embarrassment It is, rather, a matter of discovering just what sorts of beliefs and practices support what sorts of faith under what sorts of conditions. Our problem, in other words, is not to define religion but to find it

This may seem an odd comment What, after all, is in those thick tomes on totemic myths, initiation rites, witchcraft beliefs, shamanistic performances, which ethnographers have compiled in such volume for over a century ? Or in the equally thick and not much more readable works by historians on the development of Judaic law, Confucian philosophy, or Christian theology ? Or in the countless sociological studies of such institutions as Indian caste or Islamic sectarianism, Japanese emperor worship or African cattle sacrifice, European secularization or American civic religion ? Do they not contain our subject matter ? The answer, quite simply, is no they contain the record of our search for a subject matter. The search undoubtedly, has not been without its successes, and our appointed task is to keep it going and enlarge it But the aim of any systematic study of religion is, or at least ought to be, not just to describe ideas, acts, and institutions, but to determine just how and in what way particular ideas, acts, and institutions sustain, fail to sustain, or even inhibit religious faith — that is, a steadfast attachment to some transtemporal conception of reality Only if this task is accepted, will we be able to say something intelligent about the relation of religion and social change

I do not intend to imply something mysterious, or anything doctrinal, by this assertion I merely mean that we must distinguish between a religious attitude toward experience and the sorts of social apparatus which have, over time and space, customarily been associated with supporting such an attitude, if we are to have an accurate starting point for examining religion and social change When this is done, then the social study of religion shifts from a discipline in which one merely records, classifies, and perhaps even generalizes about data deemed, plausibly enough in most cases, to have something to do with religion to a discipline in which one asks close questions of such data, not the least important of which is just what does it have to do with religion We can scarcely hope to proceed very far with the analysis of religion and social change — and, in particular, what happens to

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1 Clifford GEERTZ, "Religion as a Cultural System", in *The Religious Situation* 1968, ed Donald R Cutler (Boston Beacon Press, 1968), pp 639-687 See also, C GEERTZ, *Islam Observed* (New Haven Yale University Press, 1968).

faith when its vehicles alter — if we are unclear about what in any particular situation are the vehicles of faith and how, or even if, these vehicles actually foster religious faith ?

Two very important and necessary consequences follow from these observations First, whatever the ultimate sources of the religious faith of a person or a group, it is indisputable that it is sustained in this world by symbolic forms and social arrangements What a given religion is — its specific content — is embodied in the images and metaphors its adherents use to characterize reality. In other words, it makes a great deal of difference whether you call life a dream, a pilgrimage, a labyrinth, or a carnival But the historical development of a religion rests, in turn, upon the institutions which render these images and metaphors available to those who employ them.

If this is accepted, then even a cursory glance at the religious situation in most developed and developing nations today will reveal a major direction of social change. established connections between particular varieties of faith and the cluster of images and institutions which have classically nourished them are, for certain people in certain circumstances, coming unstuck In the newer nation-states, as in the old, the intriguing question for the sociologist is: How do people of religious sensibility react when the machinery of faith begins to wear out ? What do they do when traditions falter ?

They do, of course, all sorts of things They lose their sensibility Or they channel it into ideological fervour Or they adopt an imported creed Or they turn worriedly in upon themselves Or they cling even more intensely to the old traditions Or they try to work those traditions into more effective forms Or they split themselves in half, living spiritually in the past and physically in the present Or they try to express their religiousness in secular activities And a few simply fail to notice their world is moving, or they notice only the collapse But even though such responses are observable, they do not shed much light on that which we most want to know: By what means, what social and cultural processes, are these movements toward skepticism, political enthusiasm, conversion, revivalism, subjectivism, secular piety, reformism, double-mindedness, evasion or despair taking place ?

In addressing these admittedly grand questions, I propose to explore only a few of the peculiar challenges which modern society poses for religion: those associated with the tendencies toward rational bureaucratic organization (the "hidden weapon" of all modern states), pluralism, individualism and privatism My frame of reference is necessarily that of advancing industrialism — the advance we

euphemistically associate with the term "modernization"[2] The reason for this choice is not simply that, as an American sociologist, I would naturally be expected to think principally in terms of Western society. The choice is also inspired by the continuing fascination and expanding presence of industrialism throughout the world. Even when material progress is not imposed, its presence seems irresistable. The idea behind modernization is more powerful than the slogans of any revolution, that men may act beneficently in their environment and their own circumstances, and that the benefits of material progress can be made accessible to all Ordinary people, anywhere on the globe, will not willingly resist the possibility of improvement in their day-to-day lives

There can be no doubt that traditional religious groups all experience pressure from an advanced (or advancing) industrial Society It is necessary to comprehend the direction and impact of these pressures if we are to reflect critically on the influence which religion can have on the shape of modern society and culture There is no reason to assume that the social factors producing these changes necessarily eliminate the importance of religious groups, any more than bring about the disappearance of the family or local communities, as agents of social control Much sociological writing, from Durkheim to the prophets of mass society, persists in forecasting the "disappearance" of these more primordial social forms with the development of industrialism in the West through a trend toward the atomization of interpersonal relationships Other writers have used the concept of "mass society" to describe the situation where individuals are uprooted from primary associations and hence made more vulnerable to all sorts of popular enthusiasms Although these trends have not materialized, the imagery continues to attract adherents A basic flaw in this reasoning is the continuing belief in a simple "replacement" theory of social change. In fact, the proposition that new social forms arise by invariably replacing older ones is so embedded in the vocabulary of social analysis that one has to make a special intellectual effort to resist it As a result, sociologists are regularly required to hail the "re-emergence" of premodern social forms In the last decade and a half in American sociology we have had the "resurgence" of ethnicity, a "back to

2 It has been argued that a nation becomes effectively industrialized when less than 50 per cent of its labour force is engaged in primary production (agriculture, mining, forestry) If we use this criterion, England was "industrialized" before 1841, France before 1866, and the United States by 1880 Such a criterion places a large burden on census types of definitions of occupations Scholars are less likely to offer arbitrary criteria about the advent of advanced industrial society, especially in relation to the labour force When using the term here, I take as a mark of an advanced industrial society one in which 10 per cent or less of the labour force is engaged in primary production

Jesus" movement, the "withdrawal" to communitarian social life, and an "emergent" local control movement. There is little doubt that some of these movements involve a genuine increase in public interest, shifting attitudes and orientations. But by and large they are continuations of past forms of social affiliation and activity. Much of the surprise which some social scientists register is due to a premature belief that such groups were moribund.

Although religious groups, like family and community groups, tend to be homogeneous, and to have narrow interests, they continue to contribute to powerful solidarities that develop in human society. The emergence of more complex and differentiated institutions and local communities in urban centres has not only intensified the importance of the socialization function which groups provide throughout our lives, but has also made religious groups in particular more important for the ways people order their lives and values at the concrete levels of their existence.

Let me at this point, then, briefly state my central argument. The changing situation of communal attachments under the pressure of advancing industrialism challenges religion (and here I mean all forms of organized religion) to retrench its holistic claims on the loyalty of members and to specialize its functions, while forging new and reciprocal links to the wider society Despite this retrenchment, religion still retains enough of a significant and powerful command over personal and group loyalty to emphasize its central functions of giving meaning to individual lives and stability to society

In developing this argument, I shall begin with a consideration of the features of industrial society which might be regarded as most afflicting to religion — those features characteristic of what I will call the "societal" process of social organization Next, I want to examine those specialized functions of religion that are not easily transferred to other groups or sectors of society, and finally, mention some intriguing paradoxes in the modern situation [3]

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3 "Bad poets borrow", T S ELIOT has said, "good poets steal" In the argument that follows, I have tried, in this respect anyway, to be a good poet, and to take what I have needed from certain others and make it shamelessly my own In particular, my discussion about the "societal" stage of social development draws heavily on the writings of Bryan WILSON, especially his essay "Aspects of Secularization in the West", *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, Vol 3/4 (December, 1976), pp 259-279, the discussion of modern paradoxes is more fully developed by David MARTIN in *The Dilemmas of Contemporary Religion* (New York St Martin's Press, 1978) and *A General Theory of Secularization* (New York Harper and Row, 1978) Consideration of the special functions of religion and the changing form of religious attachments in contemporary society is elaborated in my own article, "Religious Tradition and Urban Community", *Sociological Analysis*, Vol 39 (Winter, 1978), pp. 283-302

The Changing Situation of Religious Attachments in Modern Society

It has become fashionable among sociologists and social critics to assert that the age we live in is a secular age This proposition is certainly debated, and there are those who counter that our age is no more secular than any other Yet it seems to me true to assert that this age in the West is secular in a sense that has never been true of any previous historical period — all the new marginal manifestations of religious curiosity notwithstanding Let me deliberately correct that last statement It is not the "age" which is secular, in the sense that earlier sociologists and philosophers sometimes spoke of a cycle of ages. Rather, it is the structure of modern society that is secular There may be a developmental sequence, at least with regard to Western society, but all that need be asserted is that there has been a developmental process in social organization And modern social organization implies secularity.

Defining "Society"

Modern social organization is the organization of a *society* By "society" I mean not merely a social collectivity, but something more specific I mean a self-defined, autonomous, ongoing, internally structured, coherent system of segmented relationships that embrace more or less totally a large number of people who share at least the broad outlines of a cultural system and who are controlled by an identifiably common normative framework and, more importantly, a common political system Society, therefore, is a structured system of considerable scale and complexity

It remains one of the misfortunes of sociology that we use the term "society" to describe social collectivities as different in scale as an Australian aboriginal tribe of two hundred people and the United States with its two hundred million But the differences between these two social phenomena are far greater than their similarities, and we cannot be satisfied to put both into the same generic category "society"

The place of Religion

Within a large-scale social system there are invariably to be found religious institutions, religious subcultures, and individuals who manifest religious sentiments All of these are inherited from the past; all of them have their origins in the "pre-societal" stage of social organization. But societies — such as our modern nation states — are historic entities, and all of them have evolved from less elaborated, less extensive forms of social organization. In those earlier social

aggregates, religion had a vital part — a part more significant for the operation of everyday life than is the case in the modern large-scale societal systems.

Despite the continuance of religious institutions, subcultures, and individuals, the very assumptions on which modern social organization proceeds are secular assumptions. The processes of production and consumption, the coordination of activities, the agencies of control; the methods of transmitting knowledge — all are organized on practical, empirical, and rational prescriptions Societal organization demands the mobilization of intellectual faculties. it contrasts with the requirements of communal organization, which relies on the mobilization and manipulation of affective dispositions.

Within a societal system, action of a mystical, magic nature, or action oriented toward the supernatural is pushed to the marginal "voluntary" areas of activity It has little place in the official arena of action. "Uncertainties" are officially seen as elements not yet under complete human control, rather than as matters that are decided by the gods, even though individuals may still choose to have recourse to theories that transcend empirical-rational knowledge to cope with their own personal uncertainties.

Societal systems arose very slowly over the course of history and in their emergence both religious ideology and religious organization played a part This was to be expected, surely, because religion spoke the language that people already knew, and so new ideas had to be expressed in terms of the old. Science or new knowledge was first articulated as an enlargement of religious understanding and was accorded religious significance (consider, for example, the religious dispositions of men like Kepler, Newton, Faraday, and later Einstein) So it was that radically secularizing developments were first enunciated within the framework of religious discourse The very process of developing larger social systems was facilitated by religious agencies. The early nation states, for example, were brought into being by assertions of their religious legitimacy; the growth of nationalism was attended by religious arguments. At a different level, the socialization of new classes, such as the new industrial workers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in Britain, were socialized by the religious agency of Methodism to values already diffused to mercantile classes by Calvinism Thus, a phenomenon like Protestantism or Methodism, represents both an adjustment of religion to new conditions and also a kind of secularization — the elimination of mystical and sacerdotal elements from the religious system.

But if, in the development of modern society in the West, religion ceased to operate in the same ways it had in the past, religion continued to fulfil its essential functions for communities. As will already be clear, the argument I am developing assumes a distinction (an analytic distinction, it should be noted) between the concept of community and the concept of society, even though, as I remarked earlier, I do *not* assume the simple replacement of community by the development of modern societies But if we regard the community as the ongoing local group, and society as the autonomous, internally structured system of segmented relationships of large numbers of people, then we can make the further point the community is essentially religious, even while the structure of modern society is essentially secular.

It is for communities, in other words, that religion has fulfilled its essential functions in the past, rather than for societies The confusion about the functions of religion stems from the Durkheimian tradition. The so-called "society" in which Durkheim examined the functions of religion was, after all, a "society" on a very small scale In effect, it operated more as a "community," which must be the case with all very small tribes One cannot extrapolate, as sociologists have too easily tended to do, from that particular case to the large-scale societies of the modern world.

For almost all people, life has been lived in communities throughout the whole course of human history, until the very recent past. During the course of history there have been, from time to time, occasional, spasmodic, and unsustained tendencies toward a societal form of social organization This occurred with the development of ancient empires, but in every case the attempt to establish centralized control was continually jeopardized by the powerful claims of local leaders and by the limited vision of men in their allegiance to essentially local goals and relationships. The possibility of establishing a sustained and complex system of relationships, with articulated internal subdivisions and competent chains of command, to govern all the essential activities of life has existed only in recent history In European history, for example, until the emergence of the centralized nation state, local allegiances always challenged loyalties toward the greater centres. The supposed unity of the Western Church was always compromised by the persistence of local magic as well as by dissident and recurrent heresies.

Certainly some intellectuals, the elite strata of their time, had a societal vision They divided society into "strata", made mental constructs of hierarchy and order, and presented an idealized and normative pattern of empire. But these intellectuals and advisers to

monarchs lived at the centre. The fact is that local life was only occasionally and spasmodicolly invaded by the effective exercise of centrslly organized power Local executants were only occasionally wholly under the control of central rulers, and then only in such matters as taxation, military organization, and, at times, the maintenance of public law. In a wide variety of pursuits, local people were relatively unaffected by central power, and lived their lives according to local demands and in accordance with local custom.

For the mass of ordinary people, then, the abiding realities of life were their local associations and commitments. Most people lived and died in the same locality in which they were born, succeeding their fathers in their occupations, statuses, and possessions Even after the great migrations of population, whether occasioned by discoveries overseas or by the development of industry, people reverted to living their lives in local communities. This was still the stable form of social organization, and after the great migration (to the city or to North America), people set about recreating community life.

The development of new means of communication, new forms of energy and transportation, new techniques of control, and a new rationalization of labour have all challenged more traditional forms of community life Community life has neither broken down nor disappeared, but it is changing Nor have local solidarities, families, and religious groups been lost. Nor does the population of urban society necessarily form into contending social classes, with stable identities and a clear recognition of their unitary interests The challenge to communal life is indeed profound, however, precisely because community is affective, customary, organized with more limited rationality, constituted of stable units with ongoing, sustained relationships, it lives in continuity with the past — and the past is a vital determinant of the present. In contrast, the society is a centralized, highly rationally articulated system, increasingly organized and consciously planned, it is increasingly dominated by instrumental values In place of the old moral controls of the local community, it establishes technical controls. It is described in abstract concepts and categories, not in concrete terms, and the concepts are those that transcend local experience People begin to live according to these abstractions rather than at the dictates of concrete experience. A society can be described and analyzed only through such intellectualized abstract concepts, whereas a community often appears to elude the attempts to describe it in such terms; and sociologists frequently comment that we lack appropriate terms to indicate the precise texture of social relationships, the quality of atmosphere, the "feel" of local situations.

The foregoing remarks may appear to be a long digression from my subject. But in reality they come close to the heart of the argument I wish to propound.

Religion is a constituent element of communities It uses the same affective language, deals with interpersonal contacts, and simultaneously describes and engenders just those qualitatively different contexts that are so difficult to describe in dispassionate, objective terms Sometimes religion has been functional for society at large, of course; but where that has happened, the function has usually been political Religion has been a unifying ideology, providing a reinforcement in emotively powerful terms of political identity. The basic functions of religion, and the locus of its operation, exist in the community.

Religion is always moulded on the type of personal social relationship that prevails within the community But in the modern situation, we no longer live in a community-centred world. Our social experience is increasingly of a societally organized system, in which conscious planning replaces received traditions We have moved from the given nature of custom, santified by the religious legitimation of the past, to the conscious construction of procedures dictated by our strong interests in regulating the future

Community is in marked transition and transformation throughout the world, and most of all in advanced nations What is often called "secularization", then, is linked with this transformation of community, a transformation which is a concomitant of societalization. The contemporary challenge to religion arises precisely from this transformation in communal life Again, despite the growing scale and complexity of societal organization, smaller, older, and moral localized social forms continue to survive and contribute to powerful solidarities. The general pattern of social change is less one of replacement than one where the older, more localized forms maintain their vitality, both by delimiting and specializing their social functions and by forging new and reciprocal links with the larger society. Thus, while the family has lost many of its economic functions, it has become the central institution providing support for economic activity, educational attainment, and a generalized patriotism to the nation-state The local community in the West remains a primary "catchment" area within which many national organizations attempt to recruit and mobilize their membership. Though the church congregation may retain only delimited liturgical rituals, it has become a major institution shaping the delivery of social work services In short, as society grows more "societal", groups like the family and peer group, local community, the church and the school are not destroyed but refashioned. Put

differently, contemporary society, with all its defects, strains and dilemmas, cannot be reduced to the consequences of its division of labour. The content and effectiveness of society's moral values are crucially conditioned by the social organization of the family, residential communities, and religion. In fact, in a democratic society, with increasing industrialism and urbanization, family-residential communities become more central to social and political participation, and religion serves as a constitutive component of the identity of these communities.

There can be no question, of course, that the changes I am discussing carry serious risks and latent negative consequences In their lives people are becoming today more secular The change that has occured is not simply a matter of people ceasing to believe in the supernatural. It is much more a matter of creating a social context in which rational-empirical thinking is demanded because the social order itself is no longer invested with sacred meanings and mysteries, but is regulated by technology Technology is the encapsulation of a form of rationality. The machine, and even more the electronic computer, stand as the epitome of man's accumulated rationality. When all men operate as specialists, as role-performers, each uses rational skills and empirical knowledge in coordinated effort. Each uses his own abilities at their most proficient The cumulative effect is the creation of an increasingly ration-technological total environment This cumulative effect makes it difficult for any one individual to think and behave in ways other than the prescribed rational manner that technological order dictates It makes it difficult for people to act affectively or to find affective satisfactions in everyday life Since life itself has become more thoroughly regulated, since we expect to solve our human and social problems by science and planning, since the hardships we suffer are no longer "unexplained" and "unpredictable", so there is less thought of a compensatory life hereafter

But, to repeat, the displacement of community principles of social organization by societal (i e , functionally rational) principles in certain major areas of the social order does not mean that community as a central principle of organization in the daily lives of large, if not major, groups in the population of modern industrial societies will disappear "Community" and "society", after all, are not concrete historical phases of the social order One can say, of course, that archaic societies and "community" are practically coextensive. But one cannot assert the converse — that "society" and modern industrial society are coextensive. This has obvious implications for the fate of religion today. Religion may not be involved in "society" which

is superimposed on the structure of modern societies. But religion is still very much present in the basic "community" layers of modern life which are not all as peripheral or marginal and some sociologists seem to think. Moreover, "society" does not determine the life of the individual, even though the social structure clearly determines much of an individual's public activity Therefore, the problems of life crises and of the meaning of everyday life remain "religious" problems that are continuously being given "religious" answers Religion, then, remains the obvious and natural repository of sacred involvement, the core institution — along with the family — where one generation gives to the next without immediate expectation of repayment and where people's deep-seated desire to enter into what Durkheim called "the serious life" can find both expression and support Further, within the family and between the family and the larger society, religion is a primary agent for bearing and transmitting the operative values of a society This is true in the sense not only that many people identify their most important values as being somehow religious, but also that the values which inform public discourse are often inseparable from specific religious traditions In the absence of religious institutions that articulate and mediate these values, the state has an unchallenged monopoly over the generation and transmission of operative values.

Intriguing Paradoxes in the Modern Situation

Let me conclude with certain intriguing paradoxes about the interplay between religious and social change in modern society, based on my preceding observations

The Anomaly of Secularization

Societalization, as I have described it, imposes a process of rationalization and secularization, challenging religion in profound ways The assumptions in modern society are that man can manage by his own technical and rational resilience Yet men remain partly non-rational beings The very process of socialization demands the distribution of affective concern The basis on which a man learns to cope with the world is one in which personal trust, local involvement, individual intimacies, are of central importance We all grow up in the security of communal institutions The child's very unreason is moulded by stable, intimate relationships and local involvements Yet what is he moulded for ? Traditionally, the world of socialization had strong continuities with the world in which the individual would live out the dispositions implanted in childhood, sometimes the actual "others" of the socialization situation would continue to be present for many years afterwards. But in the modern world there is profound

discontinuity (disarticulation) between the situation of socialization and the impersonal world in which the individual will live more and more of his life The early training that is to draw forth human qualities for ordered personal relationships in later life is less congruous with the world that now exists In the role-articulated society, love, trust, humanity are not the basis on which operations are conducted Moral and humane faculties are replaced by technical criteria of efficiency The very facelessness of the system makes trust, personal regard, affective relations less relevant, perhaps even an impediment to the smooth operation of highly routinized, mechanical operations.

Yet without trust, without mutuality, without civic responsibility and disinterested goodwill, even highly rational systems cannot work. There is still an ultimate dependence on human dispositions. Thus we have the paradox that societalization leads to secularization, but threatens the basic value-orientations on which any kind of human society must depend

The human aspect of this social paradox is equaly apparent. Men still seek community and its benefits Many of the communal ventures of our time, from sectarianism to the hippy pads in the big cities of the West, are in their own way a search for the advantages and virtues of a world that is perceived as lost There is a demand for meaningful, and therefore local, relationships, for the benefits of life in the stable community While it remains true that religion cannot solemnize and sanctify the computer — it needs no such sanctification or legitimation — religion will remain as a central mediating structure for social life, providing comfort for men in the interstices of a soulless social system of which they are the half-willing, half-restless prisoners.

The Centre and the Periphery

Many sociologists and social observers believe that privatization, individualism, and pluralism are inherent tendencies of the modern world, and that these tendencies deeply undermine sacred loyalties and render any contribution which religion might make to social change marginal at best

I propose, instead, that the present condition of advancing industrialism in the West, ideologically and religiously, is both more complex and more curious There is a movement towards homogeneity which is countered by a movement toward rapid diversity The two movements are not merely contradictory but symbiotic The metropolitan centres expand and push against the peripheries, and these peripheries absorb, contract, or resist The confrontation of centre with periphery could be described as a tension between the universalistic cosmopolitan

criteria of liberalism, for which no ascriptive criterion is relevant, and the particularistic criterion of nationalism, centred in ethnicity and language There is, of course, a definitional and historical awkwardness about such a formulation since liberalism has included tendencies to virulent nationalism Nevertheless, there is a significant cosmopolitanism in the great metropolitan centres which corrodes the sense of locality and local loyalty, undermines minority languages, and espouses a functional morality hostile to irrational taboo and suprarational sanctity This mentality is mobile, shifting, hedonistic, technicist, more capable of activating rights than inculcating duties It has little sense of personal guilt and yet possesses an enlarged excoriating sense of collective sin Thus, individual wrong-doers are not responsible in a moral sense but collective wrong-doers — structures and cultures — *are* responsible The overall consequence is an odd alternation between hedonistic fare provided for the majority (bread and circuses) and a self-conscious collective moral masochism practiced by the minority The system runs into trouble once either the bread and circuses are in short supply or its moral performance fails to satisfy the masochistic criteria of part of the elite In short, the cosmopolitan system propagated from the centre, with no other focus of meaning than the abstract concept of citizenship and of citizen rights, and with no other basis of legitimacy than performance, is unstable. It is both unstable and expanding, and therefore extends the sector of instability Its symbols are dirtied by poor moral performance relative to expectation, its myths downgraded by criticism, its sacred places emptied of the luminous, its rhetoric deprived of resonance

These tendencies can be overstated because underneath moves the undertow of ancient pieties and respects to churches, sacred persons, holy nations, ceremonies and historical myths Nevertheless, the acid is evident and powerful and acts to corrode the basis of liberalism's own existence and power. Hence, the periphery fears the instability induced by the messages from the centre, though for the centre this fear and this "reaction" is just another indication of instability The periphery may be primarily religious or primarily linguistic and ethnic, or it may include some combination of these To the extent that each is present, there is mutual reinforcement ethnicity, language, religion each exist in a symbiotic unity, and, if this unity is reinforced by deviant politics, it is made even more resistant to outside pressure

The underlying point here is simple. The pressures and resulting instabilities creasted at the centre of modern society in the face of advancing industrialism have stimulated the national and religious identities of the periphery. The partial separation of religion and national

identity at the centre is checked at the periphery partly *because* the separation *is* so characteristic of the centre So secularity and universality are countered by particularity and by the religious.

In confronting this situation, the question persists How does religion precisely as existing on the periphery and through its mission to achieve universality by way of particularity contribute to the process of community building ? How does religion influence the shape of society precisely as a mediating structure that stands between the naked individual and the impersonal grid of the bureaucratic state ? Religious traditions are not static, their effectiveness depends on their adaptations to the contemporary scene Innovation in tradition has not in the past come from those segments of the population who are most defensively orthodox Nor is it likely to do so today or in the future Religion has certainly served people's needs longer than has the modern bureaucratic state. Moreover, bureaucratic anonymity breeds parodies of itself like the astrology movement, and creates powerful opponents in the joint force of mysticism and community. The ancient pieties of prayer, limited moral reciprocity, civic and national duty remain, even though attenuated But they are split between a very private religion at the level of the individual, based on duty and a vague concept of the origin and source and destiny of all things, and a civic cult centring around the symbols of local pride and national identity Even so, all these myths and symbols retain considerable influence and there is no reason to expect that they will cease to do so Indeed, if the current denigration of myth and symbol continues, it should activate a counter-attack since the entrance of modern society *cannot* subsist on mere technical rationality

In confronting these and other substantive issues in the interplay between religious tradition and modern society, we are not dealing with a problem of social engineering The process of adaptive change is one of searching for new elements of the transcendent This requires listening with a "third ear" to the symbolic and moral content of existing religious traditions which resonate with the contemporary scene. It must be an exercise that looks forward as well as backward.

Evangelisation Through Commitment

J. T MATHEIKAL, S.J.

EVANGELISATION is derived from the word "evangelium" which means "good news". Jesus, the first evangeliser[1], communicated good news to the people of Palestine This was evangelisation par excellence It would be profitable for us to examine what the good news was and how Jesus communicated it so that we, the disciples of Jesus, may be faithful to the spirit and direction of *his* evangelisation, for the vision and spirit of Jesus is to be foundational and primary to his disciples in their work.

Christ's Vision

In order to understand what the good news was in the personal historical experience of the people, it is necessary to have some idea of the situation contemporary to Jesus, what the "bad" elements were which Jesus wanted to transform We would like to look at these elements as Jesus and his fellow-Palestinians experienced them concretely, that is, in their time and socio-cultural context This is possible today to a significant extent as a result of the extensive research that has been carried out, during the last few decades, on the historical conditions of Jesus' time

The society at the time of Jesus was 'unusually complex' Three interacting modes of production existed among the people an egalitarian tribal organisation, a martial aristocracy appropriating the surplus of agriculture and trade, and the slave-based agricultural economy of the Roman Empire into which Palestine was subsumed. "These interacting modes of production led to massive exploitation, largely in the form of taxation" [2] Rome had its taxes, custom duties were levied by local rulers like Herod; and there was the burdensome taxation for the building and maintenance of the Temple, which fell haevily on every Jew. The result of all this was increasing rural indebtedness, and a growing rural proletariat of dispossessed small farmers who became landless and often unemployed labourers[3]

1. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, n 7
2. George SOARES PRABHU, "Good News to the Poor The Social Stance of Jesus", *Anawim*, n 29, p. 3.
3. Ibid.

Ideologically there were two very different cultural streams. a traditional Hebrew culture and a Hellenistic culture. The first was led by the Pharisees bent on preserving the traditional values, the latter consisted of a small minority of modernizers (like the Herodians or the Sadducees) who more readily accepted Hellenistic ways

> The result of these interactions was a social stratification based on both class and on 'caste'— i e , on both economic and on cultural factors *Class-wise*, we have the *upper class* made up of a religious aristocracy comprising the chief-priests, from the four major priestly families, from which the High Priest was appointed by the Romans, and a secular aristocracy which included the Jewish nobility, the merchant princes of Jerusalem, and the large land-owners of the rural districts like Galilee (Mk 10, 22), many of whom resided in Jerusalem, a *middle class* of small merchants, artisans, small peasants, priests and levites, a *lower class* of urban and rural day labourers and a growing proletariat of the unemployed and the destitute (the crippled, the sick, the possessed — all those with no means of subsistence) *Caste-wise*, Israelites of pure descent (with unflawed genealogy) were superior to those of mixed ancestry, to Samaritans, to Gentiles and to all those who were outcast, i e , considered ritually impure because of their profession (tax-collectors, tanners), some illness (lepers), mental incapacity (the 'possessed') or the violation of ritual or ethical laws ('sinners') A religious proletariat swelled the ranks of the economically marginalised [4]

In the "good news" Jesus takes up a stance for all the marginalised[5] He announced a new order to put an end to their oppression and misery: "Blessed are you that hunger now, for you shall be filled" (Lk 6, 21); and he denounced the rich "Woe to you that are full now, for you shall hunger" (Lk 6, 25) Jesus denounced whatever was dehumanising the people and announced a programme of action to enable them to achieve full growth as human beings, as the beloved children of the Heavenly Father, to build up a community of freedom, justice and love, the Kingdom of God This was why Jesus had to stand up against the socio-religious establishment of his time, which in many ways exploited the people he attacked the Scribes for their oppressive interpretion of the law (Mk 2, 23-36, 7, 1-23), the Pharisees for their ostentation, their maltreatment of widows, their violence against the prophetic champions of the poor (Mt 23, 13-36), the Chief Priests for their economic exploitation of the people in the name of religion (Mk 11, 15-19)[6].

> The challenge of Jesus was thus more than a purely religious conflict His stance had socio-political dimensions It was sensed by the establishment as a threat to their power That is why they liquidated him [7]

4 Ibid

5 Ibid , cf also an excellent contribution by Samuel RAYAN, "Outside the Gate, Sharing the Insult", *Jeevadhara*, May-June 1981, pp 203-231

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

In taking the stand that he did, in fighting for the creation of more human conditions of life for the people, Jesus was not alone in the history of Israel Jesus stood in fact in a long line of prophetic tradition (Amos 2, 6-8, 4, 1-3, 8, 4-10; Mic 2, 1-3; Is 3, 13-17, 5, 8-10; 10, 1-4, 58, 6-9; 61, 1-2, Jer 7, 1-7, Ez 22, 1-14, 34, 1-24, Lk 4, 18-21) in which God was seen as intervening in favour of the poor and the powerless in order to rectify the dehumanisation of the people and build up a new human structure (economic, socio-cultural, religious) that incorporated the spirit and values of the Kingdom of God (Considering the whole gospel we come to realise that Jesus wanted the new human condition of living, namely, the Kingdom of God, to come into being already in this life — cf especially Mt 25, 31-46 — although it would come to fulfilment only in the resurrection. It is also clear that Jesus worked in total commitment to bring about this Kingdom because he recognised that *it* was the plan of God for the human family, that it was the will of His Father).

This was the "good news" of Jesus It is important at this juncture to clarify an ambiguity this news was not good news for all; it was good news for the poor (Lk 4, 18), but bad news for the rich (Mt 19, 23-24) it was news that would bring, from the point of view of their subjective experience, a liberation, a growth, a celebration for the poor, but for the rich a deprivation, and "mourning and weeping" (Lk 6, 25) However, from the point of view of objective experience, from the point of view of God, it would be good news for all, it would be, for the rich and the poor, a principle of growth as the children of God.

This "good news" Jesus tried to communicate to the poor people (Lk 4, 21), and through the poor to the whole humankind As for the 'how' of this communication, it is very significant that Jesus did not want to impose it on the people in any way. Vatican II stresses this when it says·

> God calls men to serve him in spirit and in truth Hence they are bound in conscience but they stand under no compulsion God has regard for the dignity of the human person whom he himself created, man is to be guided by his own judgment and he is to enjoy freedom This truth appears at its height in Christ Jesus, in whom God perfectly manifested himself and his ways with men He bore witness to the truth, but he refused to impose the truth by force on those who spoke against it Not by force of blows does his rule assert its claims Rather, it is established by witnessing to the truth and by hearing the truth, and it extends its dominion by the love whereby Christ lifted up on the cross, draws all men to himself.[8]

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8. Vatican II, Decree on Religious Freedom, n. 11.

The "good news", therefore, was a loving invitation to the human family to be liberated from anything that shackled human freedom, to every individual person to become deeply aware of his or her dignity and potentiality as a child of the Father that Jesus revealed, and to assist each other to grow into the fulness of humanness Every word and action of Jesus was inspired by that one vision — shared with him by the Heavenly Father — of building a community of brotherhood where there would be love and sharing and union, as among the Son and the Father themselves (Jn 15, 9)

Agenda for Disciples

We are the disciples of Jesus We are disciples because of our faith in him; that is, because of our commitment to the person of Jesus Christ This means that we have thrown our lot with him in total trust; that we share his vision and goals, that our ways of proceeding will be inspired by his spirit, that what Jesus tried to do in his time in Palestine we will also want to do in our space and time

As Jesus interacted with the contemporary situation illumined by the will of his Father, so his disciples too will have to interact with their contemporary human conditions, illumined and guided by the revelation that they have received from Jesus Our life as disciples of Jesus, our every activity and apostolate, our work of evangelisation will have to result from the conjunction of two realities the reality of the contemporary world and the reality of our illumination in faith (the revelation in Jesus Christ and his Spirit)

The awareness of the need to come in contact with the reality of the world of today leads us to a deeper understanding of the approach of the Father to humankind in Christ, of the Incarnation As God became incarnate in Jesus, as Jesus became one with the people in everything except sin, we too, as his disciples, have to become incarnate, in a very strong and deep sense of the term, if we are to do his work, if we are to communicate the "good news" to the people, especially to the poor, in our historical point of time

The "good news" is the loving invitation to freedom, to break out of every bond that enslaves the human being today,[9] out of bonds economic, social, cultural, psychological and religious, inspired and strengthened by the message and life of Jesus, and to grow into the ful-

9 This is brought out clearly and stressed in the Final Document of the Puebla Conference (January 1979) It may be recalled that the primary task of the Conference was to discuss the "evangelisation" of Latin America, in whose population about 95% are baptized Christians Evidently therefore the Fathers of the Conference had much more than baptism in mind when they spoke of evangelization Paragraphs 482-483 of the Document speak about the elements of evangelisation as follows.

ness of humanness, building up the community that is the Kingdom of God In the "communication of this good news to the people" — which is evangelisation — it is important to stress, as Jesus does (Mt 7, 21), that action is more primary than words (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, nn 21, 41)[10]

Keeping always the dignity of every human being in mind, as would Jesus, what is the *action* that Jesus' disciples can here initiate ? Any kind of coercion, covert or overt, moral or physical, is ruled out by the spirit of Jesus which always respects the freedom of every human person On the other hand the vision of Jesus demands that our every step be one that contributes to the building up of every individual and the community. That means that, in order to help build "from within" (therefore, with supreme respect for the autonomy of the people and their freedom), first we should become immersed in the condition of our people to know them "from within", become "incarnate" among them As the Vatican Council II begins to indicate

> The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these too are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts[11]

However, it seems we have, in general, taken this "incarnation" too lightly. We have tended to take it to mean a certain generosity in working with the people, some sympathy towards strangers and "leaving one's home" to be in a new place, picking up an unfamiliar

"At the Medellin Conference we saw the elucidation of a dynamic process of integral liberation It belongs to the very core of an evangelization that seeks the authentic realization of the human being There are two complementary and inseparable elements The first is liberation from all the forms of bondage, from personal and social sin, and from everything that tears apart the human individual and society, all this finds its source to be in egotism, in the mystery of iniquity The second element is liberation for progressive growth in being through communion with God and other human beings, this reaches its culmination in the perfect communion of heaven, where God is all in all and weeping forever ceases

"This liberation is gradually being realized in history, in our personal history and that of our peoples It takes in all the different dimensions of life the social, the political, the economic, the cultural, and all their interrelationships Through all these dimensions must flow the transforming treasure of the Gospel" See *Third General Conference of Latin American Bishops*, NCCB, Washington DC, 1979, pp 104-105

10 In fact words without action have been at the root of most of the problems in the Christian community (as well as outside) Action demands solidarity and service, while words tend to deteriorate into division and domination Stress on action encourages honest work in the service of others, while stress on words promotes hypocrisy and shallowness As St John says so strongly (1 Jn 4, 20), if one is loathe to involve himself in building up the Kingdom of God here in this world — which is what 'action' means — all one's words and rhetoric about the Kingdom in the next life is gravely suspect

11 Vatican II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, n 1.

language and a few different habits. This is a very inadequate view of incarnation not very helpful and often even damaging to the work of evangelisation as we have come to understand it It is not helpful, for it still does not allow the disciple of Jesus to enter "within" the people, it is damaging, because the disciple still remains outside and dominating (his respect for the freedom and dignity of the people is too superficial, if it is present at all) On the contrary, incarnation should be a true immersion in the life-conditions of the people, their economic situation, their food and dress, language and culture, and, most of all, in experiencing with them the daily frustration of their hopes and also their daily attempts to achieve a better human life — it has to be a death, so that, with the people, the disciple can rise again

On the other hand, we have to recognise that, his identification with the people notwithstanding, Jesus unavoidably remained also different from them his awareness of life was unique and vastly different from theirs, he was the Way, the people were only on the way, he was the personification of the Kingdom of God, the people were to grow into the Kingdom Yet, with all these differences, whatever Jesus was he was *for* the people This 'for' can be best described by saying that Jesus was totally *committed* to the people Truly he was the "man for others"

We, the disciples of Jesus, are in a similar situation. In spite of our efforts at "incarnation and immersion", we can never totally identify ourselves with those to whom we go, especially the poor and the marginalised For historical circumstances have endowed us with "differences" which have become part of our very existence. for instance, our education, the awareness of life that gives us a sense of security, the community that we belong to, the talents and skills that we happen to have developed, and so on As a great socialist thinker has said, while we make sincere efforts to identify ourselves *with* the people, what is important is that all that we are and have is *for* the people, in sum, that we are genuinely and fully *committed to the people* As Jesus made the option to be with and for "the slaves" (Ph 2, 7-8), so we too have to make the option of commitment to the poor and the powerless, if we are to be true to our discipleship

Once we thus join ourselves with our people and their hopes and aspirations we will, from the gut-level, become aware of the obstacles that prevent these our brothers and sisters from growing into genuine human richness and free and loving relationship with God. As Jesus did, it will he our role then to lovingly invite them, by our life and

service, by our word and witness, by our support and encouragement, to grow from liberation at one level to the next [12]

This will be a process of action-reflection-action, a process by which the people will grow in freedom and in the mastery of their life, as centres of decision-making — learning through 'reflection' even from their mistakes — and eventually into fulness of maturity What is envisioned in this growth towards greater humanity is nothing less than the community of the children of God God our Father has gifted the whole world and its riches to *all* his children Any system that tolerates the deprivation of even one of God's children, that forces him to live a life that is not "decent", and, more so, that pushes him "below the poverty line", needs to be broken and thoroughly transformed A new society has to be built up where such indignities will not be inflicted on any child of God, where the new organisation of the community will be geared to help each and all to lead a "decent" life and to grow in freedom The more the people will become free to decide about their life, the more they will be able to actualize their talents and abilities, and grow into fuller human existence

It is possible that, during these stages of growth, the people, in their own sincere investigations, will enquire about the unseen motivations of the disciples of Jesus that urge the latter to work to bring about a community of love That could be the moment of light that calls for witnessing in word about our commitment to Jesus, which is the deepest source of our Christian life and witness, and the moment of grace that enables those people to recognise in Jesus the revelation of God to humankind

A disciple of Jesus will not be anxious about this, however Although, in his deep love for the people, he would hope that they find in Jesus the fulness of the revelation of God, he knows that his primary concern should be to bring about "God's Kindgom and his justice" (Mt 6, 33), that in fact Jesus Christ himself and the Church are at the service of the Kingdom When the disciple works to bring about the values of the Kingdom among the people, that is, to build up the community of fellowship, freedom and justice, he is doing the work of Jesus and the Church; he is communicating the "good news", he is participating in evangelisation par excellence

12. Here is where social analysis and consequent "conscientisation" (in general, 'Adult Education') become very important elements in the process of growth of the human community For social analysis will indicate whether services rendered to some individuals are at the expense of others, and what structures will be needed to correct such imbalances and promote the growth of all, and conscientisation, on the other hand, will enable people to become aware of their own capacity, as centres of decision-making, to improve their life-situations

Salvation Through Hate

Noel SHETH, S.J.

THE Hindu tradition speaks of several ways to attain liberation or salvation, such as those of wisdom (*jñāna*), action (*karma*) and loving devotion (*bhakti*) But there exists a peculiar means to salvation which may be called the patn of hatred (*saṁrambha*)[1]. While the *Visnu Purāna* (ViP) mentions only one instance, the *Bhāgavata Purāna* (BhP)[2] gives numerous examples of individuals who are saved precisely because they hated Krishna In this article we shall briefly analyze these cases, and bring out the theological basis for this unusual form of salvation.

The Visnu Purāna

In the ViP Maitreya wonders how Śiśupāla attained union (*sāyujya*) with Krishna when killed by the latter, but did not do so in his previous two births as Hiranyakaśipu and Rāvana, when he was killed by Visnu Parāśara gives the following answer As Hiranyakaśipu he was not aware that his destroyer was Visnu, for the latter was in the form of a man-lion Although Hiranyakaśipu had attained purity due to his merit, he only obtained enjoyments in the next life, but failed to merge (*laya*) into Brahman because, due to the preponderance of *rajas*, his mind did not concentrate on Krishna As Rāvana too, being subservient to love in his attachment for Sītā, he did not realize that Rāma, at whose hands he died, was actually Viṣnu and not a mortal But it was in his birth as Śiśupāla that there were numerous occasions when the names of Visnu came to his notice. With his mind penetrated with hatred accumulated through several successive births, he uttered the names of Krishna with scorn. In whatever he did, walking, sleeping, and so forth, he always had before his mind's eye the image of the divine Viṣnu Hence, although he uttered Krishna's names and concentrated on him through hatred, his sins were

1 Salvation is one of the important topics elaborately treated in my forthcoming book, *The Divinity of Krishna*, being published by Munshiram Manoharlal, Delhi.

2 References are to the following editions (i) *Viṣnupurānam*, with the commentary of Śridhara called *Svaprakāsa*, ed by Jibananda VIDYASAGARA, Calcutta Sarasvati Press, 1882, (ii) *Śrīmadbhāgavatam*, with the commentary of ŚRĪDHARA called *Śrībhāgavatabhāvārthadīpikā* and notes (*tippana*), Bombay called Śrīvenkaṭeśvara Press, Samvat 1971 (1914).

burnt by this meditation, and he entered into the Lord who has neither love nor hatred When the Lord's names are uttered (*kīrtita*) and when he is mediated upon (*smrta*) by one who hates him, the Lord bestows on him a reward difficult to be attained even by gods and demons What need be said, then, of those who are devoted to him (4, 15, 1-10) ?

We notice first that, in his earlier births, Śiśupāla did not attain salvation not only because he did not recognize Visnu but also because he *did not* concentrate on *him*, whereas as Śiśupāla he constantly brooded on Krishna even though out of hatred What is important, therefore, is not so much the motivation but the intense concentration on Krishna Secondly, we observe that the ViP seems to consider hatred for Krishna to be analogous to two forms of devotion (*bhakti*), viz , the recitation of Krishna's names (*kīrtana*) and meditation (*smarana*) on him At the same time, it distinguishes this means from devotion, which it considers to be superior to hatred Finally, I draw attention to the fact that Krishna is said to be free from love and hatred He does not discriminate between those who love him and those who hate him

The Bhāgavata Purāna

Let us now turn to the BhP in which we find several instances of such a kind of salvation Even though Pūtanā is an ogress and has the intention of killing Krishna, her sins are immediately destroyed. When Krishna walks across her body with his feet, she attains heaven (10, 6, 34-35 and 37-38), nay, she reaches Krishna (10, 14, 35) Although it may be assumed that Pūtanā, being commissioned by Kamsa to kill Krishna, is constantly thinking of Krishna, the BhP seems to associate her action with the devotional form of parental affection (*vātsalya*), for she gives Krishna suck under the guise of a good person (10, 14, 35), and her action is compared to that of the cows and women who suckle Krishna out of love, who, however, are considered to be superior to Pūtanā (10, 6, 36-40)

The demon Agha, also deputed by Kamsa to slay Krishna, cannot stand the sight of Krishna and the herder youths playing, and also wants to avenge the death of Bakī (Pūtanā), his sister, and Baka, his brother (10, 12, 13-14). He attains to similarity of form with Krishna when Krishna, following the youths, enters into Agha's mouth and suffocates him to death The BhP exclaims that one should not wonder that even a demon like Agha has his sins washed away by the touch of Krishna who is the creator of all If the mere contemplation of Krishna leads to the attainment of the Lord's sttae

what will the Lord not give Agha, whom he actually enters (10, 12, 38-39)? Krishna's omnipotence and salvific touch are emphasized here.

Harbouring enmity towards Krishna, Kamsa, in all his actions of sitting, eating, and so forth, keeps thinking of Krishna even before the latter is born, to such an extent that he sees the universe to be full of Krishna (10, 2, 23-24). Slain by Krishna, he attains that form of Krishna which he always visualized in front of himself (10, 44, 39) It should be noted that Kamsa's hatred is rooted in his fear of being killed by Krishna Hence, elsewhere (7, 1, 30) the BhP specifies that Kamsa attained salvation through fear

Paundraka, who orders Krishna to give up his title of Vāsudeva, even dresses up like Krishna (10, 66, 13-14), so that, in a way, he does not even have to conjure up Krishna's form The mention of his attaining similarity [of form] with Krishna (11, 5, 48) is more appropriate than the other reference (10, 66, 24) to his becoming one with Krishna, since he always put on the form of Krishna

Śiśupāla, who insults Krishna in highly vituperative language (10, 74, 30-37), becomes one with Krishna due to the inimical thoughts of three consecutive births, for one becomes what one thinks of constantly (10, 74, 46) Since he was a former devotee of Viṣṇu in his capacity as the door-keeper of *Vaikuntha* (3, 16, 2-3 and 30-31), it has been suggested that salvation by hatred was first bestowed on former devotees and then extended to enemies who were not devotees[3]

Defeated by the Yādavas, at the time of Rukmini's wedding, Sālva vows to annihilate them and later attacks Dvārakā (10, 76, 2-3 and 9) Wanting to avenge his friend, Śiśupāla, he encounters Krishna and taunts him (10, 77, 17-18). After engaging in a battle with him, Krishna severs his head with his discus (10, 77, 36), and Śālva attains to similarity with Krishna (11, 5, 48).

Like Śiśupāla, Dantavaktra too was previously a door-keeper of *Vaikuntha* and a fellow-worker of Śiśupāla[4] He too intends to avenge the deaths of his friends, Śiśupāla, Sālva and Paundraka, and considers Krishna to be an enemy in the form of a cousin, like a disease in one's body (10, 77, 37; 78, 1-2 and 6) Struck down by Krishna's mace, he too attains salvation (10, 78, 10)

Sometimes extraordinary phenomena are witnessed at the time one of Krishna's enemies obtains salvation by being killed by him. A smoke fragrant like that of aloe wood rises from the corpse of Pūtanā (10, 6, 34) A wonderful great light breaks forth from the carcass of

3 See Clifford HOSPITAL, "The Marvellous Acts of God A Study in the *Bhagavata Purana*" (Ph D dissertation, Harvard University, 1973), p 163.
4 See SRIDHARA on 10, 78, 4

Agha, illuminates the ten directions with its brilliance and enters into *Krishna* (10, 12, 33). Similarly light flashes from the corpse of Śiśupāla (10, 74, 45) and Dantavaktra (10, 78, 10) and streaks into Krishna. If the fragrant smoke suggests that Pūtanā died 'in the odour of sanctity', the light entering into Krishna symbolizes the union of the sanctified with Krishna

The BhP does not explicitly mention the salvation of some others who die at the hands of Krishna, such as Trnāvarta, Śankhacūḍa, the dyer, Naraka and Vidūratha On the one hand, one may assume that they too, if they hated Krishna enough, obtained salvation. Śālva's salvation is only casually referred to in an isolated verse (11, 5, 48) This verse mentions the salvation of the kings Śiśupāla, Paunḍra, Śālva and others. But we do not know whom the "others" refers to On the other hand, if Krishna delays the salvation of some of his devotees,[5] it is possible that the liberation of some of his enemies may be postponed Incidentally, when the BhP says that those who hate Krishna go to the nether world (11, 5, 15), it is referring to indirect hatred, for, as Śrīdhara points out from the context, the hate here is expressed through adultery, and so forth In other words, these people hate Krishna only indirectly through their evil behaviour and not in a direct manner

Hatred and Devotion

Like the ViP (in the case of Śiśupāla at least), the BhP emphasizes the importance of concentrating on Krishna (10, 87, 33) in order to reach him (10, 90, 47) A worm trapped by a wasp broods over it with such hatred and fear that it takes on its form (7, 1, 27) Although concentration is a form of devotion, we have seen that the ViP distinguishes concentration through hate from devotion But in some passages in the BhP we find a reinterpretation of devotion so that it includes hatred. Attributing the salvation of Pūtanā to the mercy of Krishna, Uddhava declares that he considers demons whose minds are devoted (*abhinivista*) to the path of hatred (*saṁrambhamārga*) and who visualize Krishna in the battle field to be devotees of the Lord (*bhāgavata*) (3, 2, 24) Not only does Uddhava consider them devotees, but he also refers to hatred as a path (*mārga*), like devotion, to Krishna. Viṣnu promises his door-keepers [the later Śiśupāla and Dantavaktra], that they will approach him through the discipline (*yoga*) of hatred

5 For example, Vasudeva and Devakī in a previous life (BhP 10,3,38-39) or Mucukunda, who is promised salvation only in his next birth (ViP 5,24,3, BhP 10,51,64-65)

(*saṁrambha*) (3, 16, 31) And the *tāmasa* type of devotee includes the one who practises devotion through anger (3, 29, 8)[6]

In some other passages, however, the BhP distinguishes hatred and devotion On the one hand, in one place, the BhP categorically asserts that one does not attain absorption (*tanmayatā*) as much through devotion as through hatred (7, 1, 26) On the other hand, the BhP considers devotion to be superior to hatred If Pūtanā, Śiśupāla, Paundra, Śālva and others attain to salvation, how much more will they who are devoted to, or love, Krishna (10, 6, 36, 10, 29, 13, 11, 5, 48).

Theological Basis

In the context of loving devotion (*bhakti*), the BhP often asserts that Krishna is impartial Like the wish-fulfilling tree, he grants the desires of the one who resorts to him and does so in proportion to the measure of that person's service (e g , 10, 38, 22, 10, 41, 47, 10, 72, 6) Similarly, here too, in the case of hatred, the BhP maintains Krishna's impartiality He is neither attached nor malevolent When he subdues others, he does not intend harm (*hiṁsā*) (7, 1, 24) Śrīdhara explains this to mean that Krishna subdues others for the sake of their own good In fact, both in the ViP (5, 7, 72, 5, 29, 29-30) and in the BhP (10, 16, 34), punishment from Krishna is regarded as a boon, for it removes the sins of the evil-doer Even his anger is considered as a favour (BhP 10, 16, 34)[7] Krishna may be pleased or angry But what is important is that he does not discriminate against those who hate him, for he bestows salvation on them too Secondly, both in the ViP and the BhP, we notice that what matters is not the motivation but the intensity of the emotion[8] Thirdly, it must be observed that the emotion is directed towards Krishna He is its object And the BhP explicitly tells us not to be surprised that Krishna confers salvation, for he is the omnipotent Lord (10, 12, 38) Fourthly, it appears that generally physical contact with Krishna is involved in this form of salvation Although Uddhava suggests that warriors killed by Arjuna attain to Krishna because they look at Krishna's lotus face (3, 2, 20), it is striking that in the examples given above, there is not only physical

6 See Adalbert GAIL, *Bhakti im Bhāgavatapurāna Religionsgeschichtliche Studie zur Idee der Gottesliebe in Kult und Mystik des Visnuismus*, Munchener indologische Studien, vol 6 (Wiesbaden Otto Harrassowitz, 1969), p 74

7 Krishna's anger is also mentioned when he kills Śiśupāla in a temper (10,74,43), although earlier, when Śiśupāla belittles him, he maintains his calm (10,74,38)

8 Similar is the case of some women who, throwing conventional morals to the winds (e g , 10,29,40, 10,32,21), are guilty of adultery for Krishna's sake (10,47,59 and 61) and regard him as their paramour (e g , 11,12,13) But in the fire of this passionate devotion, passion itself is purified and transformed (10,22,26).

contact with Krishna but even death. Kāliya is subdued and changed into a devotee who repents his folly. But the others do not indicate even a last minute repentance, just dying at the hands of Krishna brings them salvation. Fifthly, we have seen how both the ViP and the BhP relate the hatred of Krishna with devotion: both stress pondering on Krishna to such an extent that the hostile person visualizes Krishna wherever he goes and in whatever he does. But while the ViP only considers hatred to be analogous to devotion but really distinct from it, the BhP, at least in some passages, includes it under devotion and thus reinterprets devotion, and, on one occasion, even considers hatred to be superior to devotion. Finally, this kind of salvation takes place only during the time of Krishna's life on earth. The later literature does not mention anyone attaining salvation by hating Krisna (Visnu) after the latter has returned to his heavenly abode. It would seem, therefore, that actual physical contact with Krishna (Viṣnu) and death at his hands is a necessary condition for this type of salvation. It belongs to that privileged time when the Lord is present in the world through his descents (*avatāra*). These, then, are the theological principles on which the doctrine of salvation through hate appears to be based.

In a sense, in the final analysis, all that really matters is concentration on Krishna. He is all that counts. As Nārada declares, many attain Krishna by focusing their minds on Krishna through various emotions: the herder women through passion, Kamsa through fear, Śiśupāla and other kings through hatred, the Vrsnis through being related, the Pandavas through affection and Nārada through devotion (7, 1, 30).

Correspondence

Dear Editor,

In P Drego's article on "Women in the Church" (*Vidyajyoti*, September 1981) I was struck by the sadness of a remark on p 386 "Somehow the term laity does not have a potent meaning any more Yet for lack of another term I shall continue to use the word " Her disenchantment with the term is because of the "hierarchy-laity syndrome" to which she refers in the next paragraph In common usage laity is reduced to being the polar opposite of hierarchy, and is defined merely by its *lack* of all that is possessed by its opposite

Linguistic usage is a good indicator of popular attitudes, and there can be little doubt that these are still largely unaffected by the biblical understanding of the true dignity of the People of God, his *laos*, as this has been recovered by modern study of the Bible (see G Keerankeri, *Vidyajyoti*, December 1981, pp 528ff), and expressed, for example, in *Lumen Gentium*

In this connection it is worth noting the way in which laity' and 'layman' are translated in Hindi This, if Bulcke is an indication of accepted usage, perpetuates the merely negative and derogatory understanding of those terms (Is it the same in other Indian languages ?) For 'laity', Bulcke gives *jan sadharan, ayajak-varg* and for 'layman', *ayajak*, *yajman* (*sc* client — of the priest !)

The *English-Hindi Glossary* (H T L C, ed Dr C W David) attempts to be more positive, though only at a phenomenological level for 'laity', *upasak-varg*, *khristiya janata*, and for 'layman', *upasak*, *mandali-sadasya*, *khristiya jan*

It would be good to know if those who theologize in the Indian mother-tongues have found any better ways of expressing the richness of meaning contained in *laos* and its derivatives Popularizing a more adequate terminology could contribute towards deepening the self-understanding of the People of God

Yours sincerely,

Brotherhood of the Ascended Christ, J D M STUART
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Continued fom p 208

sex in and outside married life, and other aspects of marriage The second part is based on Dr J A Menezes' book *A Natural Approach to Family Planning* After bringing out the characteristics of male and female sexuality, Amaladass devotes two separate chapters to male and female sexual organs These chapters give a very clear and accurate knowledge of the biology and function of sex The use of diagrams and pictures adds to clarity A chapter describes the different phases of pregnancy and delivery Subjects like breast-feeding, twins, sex determination are also briefly treated Those related to family planning, like different methods of birth control, abortion and their moral impact are treated in a separate chapter Finally the author concludes with a Christian understanding of sexual morality today The book is written with a view to help those who already married and going to be married Though short, it provides the reader with clear accurate and reliable information about the subject It will prove a very handy manual for those giving sex education and marriage courses

J KERKETTA, S J

Patit Pawan By I VELLARINGATT *Patna, Prabhat Prakashan*, 1980 Pp 211 Rs 8

The book under review is the Hindi translation of the book, *King of Sinners*, by the famous American writer, Rev Eddy Dohorty This is a very lively life of Jesus, written after long reflection and meditation From the point of style and expression the original book is delightful and reads like a novel The biography is based on the four Gospels But, as the Gospel writers have not tried to give a chronological narrative of Jesus' life, our writer also gives more stress to what Jesus said and did than to chronological reporting Our translator too shows the same qualities as the original author His language is simple and flowing Any Hindi reader will find it easy and interesting to go through the book It is indeed a significant contribution to Hindi Christian literature

J KERKETTA, S J

Book Reviews

Sacred Scripture

Synopse structurelle de l'épître aux Hébreux By Louis DUSSAUT Paris, Cerf, 1981 Pp viii-202 (No price given)

For the last thirty years or so the growing interest in the letter th the Hebrews has manifested itself not only in studies about the doctrine of the book, but also in research into its structure Dussaut's work is based upon the findings of his predecessors, especially A Vanhoy (1963)

The method followed is too complex and the terminology too technical to be exposed here Dussaut examines not only some parts or sections of Hebr but proposes a complete survey of the structure Two folders are added to the volume giving a synopsis, one in French translation (TOB), the other in the original Greek text, this latter obviously being more important for a study of this kind Dussaut divides the letter into fourteen sections grouped into seven 'columns', each column consisting of two sections The letter is made up of three parts A 1st-2nd col (=sect 1-4), chs 1,1-5,10, B 3rd-5th col (=sect 5-10), chs 5 11-10 39 C 6th-7th col (=sect 11-14) chs 11,1-13,25 Based upon Semitic stylistic characteristics, 'inclusion', symmetry concentric development, etc, the analysis shows that the 1st section is connected with the 14th, the 2nd with the 13th, and so on As most commentaries on Hebr had already noted, the central part of the letter (both topographically and thematically) is climactic, developing the meaning of the sacrifice of Christ For the reader who is not familiar with the method the argument at times may look rather subtle, v g Dussaut sees in the three parts a threefold aspect of a basic theme with reference to the OT period (1st part), the NT or Christ (2nd part), eschatology (3rd part) Concretely, taking the basic theme of 'to go out' and 'to enter' we find the OT went out but could not enter (Exodus and the Promised Land), Christ goes out (birth) and enters (into the sanctuary), the NT goes out and is sure to enter

We must note that this study on the structure of Hebr, though directly concerned with the stylistic structure of the letter, is not limited to the literary sphere As a matter of fact, the detailed analysis of vocabulary and themes offers many points which throw light upon the doctrine of the letter as well Dussaut further envisages to publish a companion volume on the theology of Hebr That volume based upon the present study must expose the 'structure in depth' of Hebr, whereas the present study is limited to the 'surface structure' of the letter

One may presume that the general reader will think that it must be difficult to 'read' a letter if one has constantly to pay attention to its contexture or tissue We should not overlook, however, that our NT 'letters'— and for that matter even the whole NT — may have been intended normally to be listened to rather than to be read The structure of the document was in auditive means of emphasizing the message by repeating words and themes, where our modern books use rather visual means paragraphs, title of chapters, punctuation, etc Evidently, one may still remain uncertain as to what extent the inspired author did really structure his writing, intentionally or spontaneously, and to what extent the scholar 'discovers' structure by means of his own methodology

J VOLCKAERT, S J

Fundamental Theology

The Philosophy of Religion By Ninian SMART *London, Sheldon Press*, 1979 Pp x-196 £ 3 50

This is a slightly revised edition of a book first published in 1970 It subjects religious faith and language to philosophical enquiry, without however making them subservient to reason The questions of theodicy and the preambles of faith come up for updated discussion As could be expected from a British scholar of religions, the stress in the

early chapters is on the question of meaning as studied by linguistic analysis. I am not able to follow him all the way in his logical arguments which seem to me at times to cross over from logic to ontology I am not convinced, as the author seems to be, that the concept of a necessary being is self-contradictory, though it is true that the ontological argument makes an invalid use of it The stress on the need for placing religious affirmations in their context of worship is welcome, and the neat distinction between meaning and truth does not prevent the author from entering into the difficult questions of religious affirmation — without writing a book ot apologetics The examination of the cosmological and teleological arguments of St Thomas seems to me quite incomplete, some of the author's criticisms of the arguments seem to forget that after the question 'utrum sit Deus' St Thomas studies 'quomodo' and 'quid sit Deus', where many of the difficulties are answered Smart's conclusion is that these arguments raise "limiting" problems regarding the cosmos as a whole, questions which are therefore beyond science and to which religion gives *one* possible but not a "mandatory" answer He also analyses the critiques and explanations of religion by psychology (Freud and Jung) and sociology (Durkheim) Here again he argues to show a non-conflict between science and religion, but does not really face the question that by making the religious attitude superfluous the scientific explanation may actually condemn it He concludes that "the truth of religious traditions remains an open question and not one to be decided in advance by an adherence to philosophical scientism" (p 187) I find the treatment of so-called 'miracles' quite superficial from a Biblical angle But the book has the merit of treating philosophical questions related to religious faith seriously It argues them at some length, if somewhat tortuously and, to me, unconvincingly

G GISPERT-SAUCH, S J

Ecclesiology

Oser croire en l'Eglise. By Gustave MARTELET *Paris, Cerf,* 1979 Pp 187 (No price given)

Is the Church even today a sign of the presence of Christ in the world, or has she become a counter-sign ? Is she still, in the words of Vatican II, the universal sacrament of salvation, or does she so obscure what she was destined to manifest that she misleads more than she leads people to God ? The question is important at a time when many in the Christian world are opting for Christ without the Church, or come to the East in search of a spiritual experience which apparently they have not found in the Christian tradition Martelet's bold answer is that the Church is still the way to God because she continues to be the Church of Jesus Christ Sinful, yes, because we who are the Church are sinful, yet, holy, with the holiness of him on whom she is founded and who is her head. His reflection consistently starts from Jesus Christ and ever returns to him. In a previous book on the "Master-Ideas of Vatican II" (*Les ideés maîtresses de Vatican II*) he had rightly stressed the Christocentrism of the Council which has been called the "Council of the Church", showing that in the mind of the council itself the Church can only be understood in relation to Christ He prolongs this meditation here Without concealing the obscurities and the shadows, he invites Christians to an act of faith — which in the last analysis is faith in Jesus Christ himself from whom the Church cannot be separated, and a call to our own conversion

J DUPUIS, S J.

Liturgy

Hallowing the Time Meditations on the Cycle of the Christian Liturgy By Geoffrey PRESTON, O P *London, Darton, Longman and Todd,* 1980 Pp x-163 £ 4 50 (Available from Examiner Press Bookshop, 35 Dalal Street, Bombay 400023)

G Preston, a Methodist convert to the Catholic Church, died in 1977 as a member of the Order of St Dominic, aged forty-one He was leaving behind him notes for retreats and of homilies, of which nothing had been published before his death On request from the Superiors of the Order, A Nichols has undertaken the task of offering some of those to the public A first volume, *God's Way to Be Man*, published in 1978, has already shown Preston to have been a profound spiritual master and a brilliant writer That volume contained retreat conferences centred on the theme of Christian Life (cf VIDYAJYOTI 1979, p 432) The same editor gives us now a second collection, this time of medi-

tations on the liturgical cycle The first volume had been prefaced with a sketch of the author's life, in the Preface to this one the editor tells us his own impressions of the author's personality

The meditations follow the liturgical year, comprising the four Sundays of Advent, the Octave before Christmas (meditations on the O antiphons), Christmas and Epiphany, the Sundays of Lent, Holy Week and Easter, and five Sundays of Easter Preston does not comment on all the lectionary readings ascribed for a particular day in one year of the triennial cycle He chooses one to develop his principal theme, or centres his reflections around an antiphon, or again proposes the meaning of a liturgical day independently of any direct reference to the lectionary But, whatever the method used, he shows throughout that the liturgy cycle is the heart-beat of the Church and of Christian Life The book is recommended for spiritual reading and meditation, or for the preparation of homilies

J DUPUIS, S J

Liberation Theology

Theologist in Conflict The Challenge of Juan Luis Segundo By Alfred T HENNELLY *Maryknoll, Orbis Books*, 1979 Pp xxiii-200 $ 8 95

Over the past two decades, the Uruguayan Jesuit, J L Segundo has been one of the most prolific theologians in South America Among other works he is the author of the 5 volume series, *A Theology for Artisans of a New Humanity*, undoubtedly the most comprehensive effort todate at presenting a synthesis of theology from a South American liberation view-point (cf VIDYAJYOTI 1975, pp 40-42, 470-471, 1976, pp 88-89, 186-187) His more recent work, *The Liberation of Theology* is also perhaps the most thorough presentation of the methodology involved in doing theology from a perspective of liberation (cf VIDYAJYOTI 1978, pp 290-291) Segundo was therefore a likely, if not obvious, choice for a North American theologian desirous of initiating a dialogue with a South American counterpart

This is what the volume under review is doing. Hennelly analyzes the major themes of Segundo's work thus far, situating them in the context of the South American liberation movement But he does more, for, as the subtitle of the book indicates, he takes Segundo's work as a challenge for North American theologians and suggests areas of application of Segundo's ideas to the North American context He was well equipped to undertake such a task, having been sensitized to liberation movements through his own personal contact with various Third World situations

The "Conflict" between the theologies of the first and third worlds stands out sharply, and this is beneficial, for no dialogue can succeed without a frank recognition of differences But it does not result in confrontation On the contrary, Hennelly shows a remarkable ability to understand and to listen to what South American theology is telling the first world We need more books of this kind to initiate a true theological dialogue between North and South which in the mind of this reviewer has become one of our most pressing needs

J DUPUIS, S J

Liberation Theologies in North America and Europe Mission Trends, No 4 Edited by Gerard H ANDERSON and Thomas F STRANSKY, C S P *New York/Ramsey, Paulist Press*, 1979 Pp xii-289 £ 3 45

Third World Theologies was the title of Volume 3 of the series "Mission Trends", it offered reflections on Christian Mission from Asia, Africa and Latin America, and showed that centres of influence in theological construction are rapidly emerging in the three continents of the Third World Volume 4, entitled *Liberation Theologies in North America and Europe*, gives an account of the liberation movements and theologies which are likewise coming to the fore in the continents of the First World There too there are men and women who experience the burden of political, economic, social racial and sexual dependence and oppression who long for liberation from whatever vitiates human projects and aspire for integral salvation In North America these groups include the Black, the Native, the Asian American and Hispanic communities, as well as women in any community or Church

Sections of the book are devoted to the Black Experience (2), the Feminist Experience (3), the Asian American Experience (4), the Native American Experience (5), the Hispanic American Experience (6) Each contains personal testimonies as well as reflections, thus witnessing to both the liberation praxis and the theological awakening of the various groups The first section, en-

titled "Mission and Liberation", is made up of various essays by First World theologians, mostly from North America, in which they enter into a fruitful dialogue with South American theologians The exchange of views is frank and open, sympathetic though not uncritical McAfee Brown, whose sympathy for South American theology is beyond questioning, nevertheless pleads that it may not become insulated True as it is that theology needs to be different in different contexts, the contexts — and the theologies — must also converge, and there is need for a dialectic between particularity and a global vision The resonance of liberation themes in recent Western theology is a hopeful sign in this regard In an open letter to J M Bonino, J Moltmann asks to what extent South American theology is truly South American Does not the South American way to socialism, unlike the Chinese, follow a European model ? He too calls for collaboration between first and third world theologies P Berger studies P Freire's concept of "consciousness raising" and asks critical questions Is not the concept too paternalistic in so far as it — wrongly — assumes the absence among the oppressed people of what it claims to arouse ?

Lack of space makes it impossible to review all the contributions What has been said suffices to show that the book provides the reader with a rich fare

J DUPUIS, S J

Prophets of Liberation

Archbishop Romero Martyr of Salvador By Placidio EZDOZAIN *Maryknoll Orbis Books*, 1981 Pp xix-98 $ 4 95

"As a Christian, I don't believe in death without resurrection If they kill me, I will rise again in the Salvadorean people My hope is that my blood will be like a seed of liberty" Thus wrote Archbishop Oscar Romero of San Salvador shortly before he offered his life for his people At a memorial Mass, Bishop T C Kelly, General Secretary of the North American National Conference of Catholic Bishops commented "The assassin's bullet will not silence the power of his words or his witness"

The book is a vivid account of Oscar Romero's life and death, from his appointment as Archbishop of San Salvador in February 1977 to his martyrdom on 24 March, 1980 It is also a living testimony to the power of his witness by an Augustinian priest who shared closely in his struggle The quality of the narrative lies in the concrete way in which the drama is told, its protagonists, priests but also ordinary *campesinos* surrounding the bishop come alive in these pages It is further enhanced by the total sincerity of the story-teller He does not unduly idealise his hero He shows how and through which tensions and conflicts Archbishop Romero gradually came to discover and respond to his prophetic mission It did not come to him as naturally as we might wrongly imagine, in fact he was very much schooled into it through the mediation of the people to whom he had dedicated his life and by whom he stood For this his example is all the more inspiring and his courageous stand prophetic

J DUPUIS, S J

Mystic of Liberation A Portrait of Pedro Casaldaliga By Teofilo CABESTRERO *Maryknoll, Orbis Books*, 1981 Pp xxii-200 $ 7 95

"There is no one quite like Dom Pedro — a witty, fiery, mystical, practical poet-priest, bishop of the poor, defender of the Indian, a combination of Oscar Romero, Helder Camara, Dan Berrigan and any ten fellow Catalans chosen at random ", says the blurb of the book, attempting to describe Pedro Casaldaliga, the Spanish born bishop of São Félix do Araguaia, defender of the Amazonian poor of Brazil In this book, a priest-journalist of Nicaragua, who is a close friend of Dom Pedro, offers his many dialogues with him as they actually took place on his several and prolonged visits to Mato Grasso He does it with supreme talent, never intruding on his subject but skillfully allowing the essential Casaldaliga to come through on every page The book cannot be described, it needs to be read Here we see liberation praxis in action, with all that it implies by way of genuine identification with the poor, of denunciation and announciation and of risk to oneself No wonder that the liberation theology offered in the process by a very perceptive and reflexive mind is convincing and contagious

J DUPUIS, S J

Teilhardiana

The Heart of Matter. By Pierre TEILHARD DE CHARDIN *London, Collins*, 1978 Pp 278 £ 4 95.

This is the thirteenth and last volume of Teilhard's collected essays, and with it the Committee of the Friends of Teilhard, which undertook the publication of his works, has virtually accomplished its task The volume is important, for it contains two key essays of Teilhard's later period, often quoted but which had hitherto remained unpublished "The Heart of Matter" which gives its name to the volume, and "The Christic" These are followed by a number of shorter pieces which have come to light

In "The Heart of Matter", written in 1950 — he died in 1955 — Teilhard exposes, as he sees it in the maturity of his thought, the very foundation from which the whole structure of his work has arisen In a sort of autobiography, he describes the general process and the principal stages of "the emergence of the picture" The two converging roads which he has travelled throughout his life, that of Science and of Religion, meet with unmistakable clarity Teilhard allows us to see here the unity of his whole life which consisted in holding together, and in beholding the marvellous coherence of what he called his two faiths "The Christic' is even more decisive Dated in the month before his death, it brings the last touch to his grandiose vision of "the ever-greater Christ", completing such previous Christological essays as 'Christ the Evolver" and others Here we have in its final form, pinned down in words filled with a "sense of dazzled wonder", Teilhard's majestic vision of Christ the Omega Point, the converging centre and the apex of cosmic evolution Three days before his death, Teilhard summed it all up on the last page of his diary in cryptic form, this moving document is also included in the volume (p 104)

Among the other essays included in the volume, we may point to "My Intellectual Position" and "My Universe" which, though written at an earlier date, also clarify Teilhard's intellectual and theological position Special mention must be made of "The Mass on the World", a profound meditation on the cosmic significance of the Eucharist, dated in its last form from the desert of Ordos where on a scientific expedition Teilhard was unable to celebrate Mass Others pieces include occasional writings in which Teilhard's deep humanity comes to the fore, and war-time essays which reveal his attitude to war

As with this volume the series comes to an end, it seems in order to express our gratitude to the editors and publishers who have made known to us one of the greatest Christian thinkers of modern times

J DUPUIS, S J.

Spiritual Life

Dynamics of Spiritual Life An Evangelical Theology of Renewal By Richard F LOVELACE *Exeter, The Paternoster Press*, 1979 Pp 455 £ 4 50

This is not an easy book, but it is a beautiful one It is difficult, because it presupposes a good deal of knowledge on the religious developments undergone by American Protestantism and because the author's treatment is so rich and thorough However, it provides a remarkable insight both into the personal evolution of dedicated Christians and the great spiritual awakenings in the U S A , particularly for the last ten years

The author aims at writing "a manual of spiritual theology It is time that Protestants realized that they share with Catholics a deep interest and a rich heritage in Christian spirituality" (p 11) "At another level, this work offers a general plan for reformation and renewal in the Christian Church" (p 12) Spiritual renewal is the basic condition of any real Christian progress, of a reformed Church always in process of reformation

Dr Lovelace is professor of Church History at the Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (USA) In his younger years he passed through a 'conversion' to Evangelicalism (pp 229-231) Hence his work is suffused with a constantly recurring sense of Christian history, as far as it provides lasting lessons for renewal

All through the book the dynamics of justification-sanctification, as pithily exposed by Luther and above all by Calvin, are taken seriously In many ways the author regards St Augustine and the current of spiritual theology the great North African had launched, as one of his foundations On the other hand, very little is mentioned about Eastern Christian spirituality. Lovelace's outlook is very Western, and he makes much of the Pietist and Puritan movements of old as basic to the Protestant tradition of renewal Among authors who influenced him most, Ph J Spener (1635-1705), the Alsatian founder of Lutheran Pietism, Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), the American Congregationalist whose theology was inclined

to mystical experience, and Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920), the Dutch theologian, whose orthodox Calvinism was a spiritual way of life, stand out as models

Obviously the person of Christ must be the source and exemplar of all spiritual renewal But the Old Testament also provides aims and means (pp 61-80) The action of the Holy Spirit is exposed at some length, e g in relation to modern Pentecostalism (pp 119-132) The author shares his theological, spiritual and pastoral reflections on the history of renewals, mostly in the U S A Particularly revealing are the pages devoted to the causes for the failure of reform movements (pp 254ff) Among these, Lovelace finds the devil, the evil power that tempts, opposes, infiltrates, nullifies Perhaps his insistance on devilish interventions will make him appear somewhat fundamentalist, a label however, which he would certainly reject He also deals with the vicissitudes of social concern as an essential aspect of evangelical renewal

Dr Lovelace's mind and heart express themselves in an authentic ecumenical appraisal of all Western traditions, whether it be the monastic tradition of Catholics, revivals of the Anglican type, or any other This is perhaps the most positive aspect of a book filled with spiritual content

E R HAMBYE, S J

Yoga and Contemplation. By Brahmachari AMALDAS *London, Darton, Longman and Todd*, 1981 Pp xiii-146 £ 2 95

This is the English edition of a book published in 1980 by Asian Trading Corporation, Bangalore In his Foreword Bede Griffiths writes "Brahmachari Amaldas, who has had a thorough training in Hatha Yoga, shows how the physical and psychological discipline of Hatha Yoga can be used as a basis for Christian prayer and contemplation" (p v) "But the book", our reviewer wrote when it was first published, "is more than a do-it-yourself manual The author shares with us his religious and psychological experiences, interpreted in current theological language, and offers us valuable meditations' (cf VIDYAJYOTI 1981, p 355) The commendation given in the original review can be repeated The book is a welcome addition to the already abundant literature on a Christian approach to Yoga in the Dechanet tradition

J.D.

Religion and Peace

World Religion/World Peace. Edited by Homer A JACK *New York, World Conference on Religion and Peace*, 1979 Pp xvii-200 (No price given)

Religion in the Struggle for World Community Edited by Homer A JACK *New York, World Conference on Religion and Peace*, 1980 Pp xxv-418 (No price given)

The World Conference on Religion and Peace was founded in Kyoto, Japan, where it held its first meeting in 1970 Its second World Conference took place in Louvain, Belgium, in 1974 and its third in Princeton, New Jersey, in 1979. Through the last decade, the movement has gained momentum, resulting also in the creation of continental chapters of the Conference The Asian Chapter held its second meeting in New Delhi in November 1981

The thrust of WCRP is well known It consists in religion applied to human and world problems All the religious traditions of the world are represented in the Conference Their leaders meet at world or continental level in a continued effort to apply their common religious persuasion in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men to the task of bringing about a more human and more just order, one where peace will reign among people and nations. Their action and their programmes are based on the conviction that religion and religions have a unique contribution to make to the ordering of human relationships for true humanity cannot be severed from transcendence

We have commented in this periodical on WCRP II (Louvain) and WCRP III (Princeton) We have published a report of both Conferences and their final Declaration (cf VIDYAJYOTI 1975, pp 98-110, 134-138, 1980, pp 5-11, 26-36). The volumes under review contain the Unabridged Proceedings of the two Conferences, edited with great care by H A Jack, the Secretary General of WCRP The titles of the two volumes indicate the different focus given to the two assemblies, they also point to a progressive shift of emphasis from peace in the world to the building up of a world community At a time when world peace seems to be more threatened than ever before, it is hoped that these two volumes and the movement which they represent will help to raise the consciousness of religionists all over the world

to the responsibility placed in their hands of contributing to a better world for all men

J DUPUIS, S J

Hinduism

Realization of God according to Sri Aurobindo. A Study of a Neo-Hindu Vision of the Divinization of Man By George NEDUMPALAKUNNEL C M F *Bangalore, Claretian Publications* 1979 Pp xvi-308 Rs 16

With his vast literary output and synthetic creativity Sri Aurobindo remains a favourite topic for theological dissertations The difficult but fertile integration he has achieved of the Vedantic and the Tantric currents of thought makes of him both a genuine representative of the Hindu tradition and a teacher for our times, whose thought redeems the material universe so neglected in the dominant Vedantic tradition, takes into account the significance of evolution and history (whatever be the influence from the West he may have received), and adds a social dimension to the Hindu quest for liberation Fr Nedumpalakunnel shows all this in a thesis presented at the Gregorian University He aims at uncovering the heart of Aurobindo's system by studying his teaching on the realization of God and the way thereto The study, well ordered and clear, focuses on the master's spiritual teaching rather than his metaphysical system, although the two aspects are obviously interlocked The meaning of God-realization, the obstacles to it, the nature of "integral yoga", the paths through works, through knowledge and through love, and a synthetic view of Aurobindo's teaching on these points are exposed in seven well documented chapters The author quotes the seer of Pondicherry abundantly, making use mostly of *The Synthesis of Yoga*, *Letters on Yoga* and *The Life Divine*, though the other writings are also competently taken into account Perhaps a more systematic attention to the chronology of the different writings and consequently to the evolution of the master's thought would have helped our understanding of Aurobindo I find the eighth and last chapter, where a critical evaluation of the system is attempted the least satisfactory While it is legitimate to make an evaluation from the "Christian" perspective, one should not too easily identify the Christian teaching with a narrow theological system, ignoring most of the Patristic and Oriental thought, not to speak of the mystical and non-Catholic traditions To say that "in the Christian view experience of God should necessarily be religious" is either tautological or frankly untrue In spite of a desire to approach the system of Aurobindo with an open mind and in a dialogical spirit, we miss here a certain receptivity, a sincere desire to learn and possibly to correct one's own theological formulations, though this attitude does appear, somewhat belatedly, in the last three pages of the book Again, when points of convergence are enumerated in this chapter, this is done through references taken at random from biblical or ecclesiastical documents As Aurobindo is essentially a synthesiser of much of the Hindu spiritual tradition (more than of its metaphysics), it seems that a comparison with Christian synthesisers of the spiritual life would be more useful In spite of these shortcomings, students of Aurobindo will find in the first seven chapters of the book an honest and useful presentation of the seer's teaching on God-Realization

G GISPERT-SAUCH, S J

Hindi Literature

Galatiyon aur Iphisiyon ko Sant Paulus Prerit ki Patriyan. By William BARCLAY *Bareilly, The Hindi Theological Literature Committee,* 1980 Pp xvi-158 Rs 6

This is the translation into Hindi of Dr William Barclay's volume on St Paul's letters to the Galatians and the Ephesians The aim of Barclay's Daily Study Bible Series, in the words of the author himself, is to enable people to know Jesus Christ better, to love him more dearly and to follow him more closely He makes the results of modern scholarship available to the reader in a form which is free from theological and technical terms the commentary is precise, yet full of meaning and relevant to life In the author's personality and style there is combination of wisdom, critical approach and popular devotion

The translator himself, Dr C W David, believes that Barclay's books will be of great service to the Indian Church He intentionally uses simple language so that as many people as possible may profit from them He believes that these two letters are of special importance for the Indian people For, according to the letter to the Galatians our faith in Jesus Christ makes us free, and freedom

means to be slaves of one another in love and to live according to the Spirit of the Lord Indians who believe in liberation through work and in the unity between the self and God, incline to give more importance to spiritual joy than to brotherly love Similarly, the letter to the Ephesians stresses the coming into unity of all things in Christ It is hoped that the work will help many to apply themselves seriously to Bible study and to live the Gospel message in their day to day life

J KERKETTA, S J

Baibil ke Hindi Anuwadakon kee Bhasha By Dr M VECCHUR *Allahabad, St Paul Publications*, 1981 Pp 80 Rs 12

This remarkable work is written as an introduction to the author's thesis, *The Language of the Nineteenth Century Hindi Translations of the Bible*, presented at Allahabad University, for which he was granted the D Phil degree in January 1979 The book throws light on the beginnings, development and history of Hindi prose According to the author it began and took a definite shape in 19th century At the same time many translations and publications of the Bible also occurred Four translations of the whole Bible were made in the 19th century itself

In this book the author takes the Lord's prayer as an example to show the development of Hindi prose Without being exhaustive, the study throws much light on the subject The author draws the following conclusions From the beginning the translators differentiated Hindi and Urdu as two distinct languages From the study of phonetics it is clear that they used the vocabulary of the local people Their purpose was to make the language as simple as possible Besides the use of words from braj and local languages, Arbi-Pahrsi words were also frequently used The translaors were very successful in using sanskrit words No fixed rules regarding gender, number and case were followed yet In the structure and formation of sentences they followed norms of the original language Occasionally their language was very idiomatic, though unscholarly, and perhaps too high for the common people Some have given more stress to literal translations, others to translations of general ideas, others still to translations based upon the closest equivalents Every publication of a translation saw a marked progress in the language.

Besides studying the development of the Hindi language, our author also gives a general introduction to the whole Bible, its original language and its translations in different languages down the centuries He devotes a chapter to translation itself, its meaning, need, history, classifications, the qualities necessary for a translator Coming back to Hindi, he selects some translators and compares their language with the language of some modern authors These translators have prepared the Hindi grammar and Hindi dictionary The author feels that their work has definitely helped the growth of Hindi prose

J KERKETTA, S J

Susamachar kee Ghoshna Aj kee Duniya mein Translated by AMALADASS. *Ranchi, Dharmik Sahitya Samiti*, 1980 Pp 94 (No price given)

This book is the Hindi translation of the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* of Pope Paul VI The translation is made from the English version, "This Is Gospel", by Rev Robert Bogen, but at the same time, wherever necessary, the translator has used the original text This Hindi adaptation of the Exhortation is welcome It will inspire many Christians of the Hindi speaking regions to take an active part in the proclamation of the Gospel

J KERKETTA, S J

Oxford Kaleesiya ka Gyankosh Edited by F L CROSS and E A LIVINGSTONE *Bareilly, Hindi Theological Literature Committee*, 1980 Pp xxxvi-1349 Rs 80

This book is the Hindi translation in abridged form of *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* As there exists a deep relation between the Church and the Western civilisation, the history, life and institutions of the Church are subjects of interest not only for Christians but also for all those involved in the study of contemporary cultures In order to reach not only professional intellectuals but the educated masses, the dictionary gives brief and simple, yet sufficiently comprehensive information on all the topics it covers Technicalities and technical words are purposely avoided The dictionary covers the vast area of 1900 years of Church history The essays are informative, concrete and to the point The Hindi edition keeps the orientation of the original, but, to achieve their own purpose, the editors

have been selective in the choice of subjects and summarised the original essays Those especially which relate less to the Church and more to philosophy, literature and other sciences have been considerably shortened Most of the biblical names are also left out Similarly, the references and bibliography which in the original were given after each essay to help further study and research, are here omitted The dictionary is an important and welcome addition to the growing Christian literature in Hindi It provides a handy reference book on subjects related to the Church which will be of great interest to the Hindi speaking world

J KERKETTA, S J

Purbi Kalisiyaon ka Itihas. By LUCY A MILNE *Bareilly, Hindi Theological Literature Committee*, 1980 Pp xvi-192 Rs 8

If we are to spread the Kingdom of God and unite all in the love of Jesus, the author of the book under review feels, we need to study the history of the Orthodox Church The book witnesses to the author's love for Christ and to her dedicated work for the spread of the Kingdom Written as a text book for B Th students it traces briefly the whole history of the Orthodox Church The first chapter gives a succinct account of the division between the Eastern and Western Churches Chapter two looks into the political, cultural and religious causes of the division The influence of the crusades on the Eastern and Western Churches is dealt with in chapter three In five subsequent chapters the author gives a brief history of different Eastern Churches between 600 and 1500 and from 1500 up to now A brief description of the spread of the Eastern Churches in the twentieth century and of the division of the Eastern Churches in India also finds its place A last chapter gives a short account of the Orthodox Churches in different countries The book will prove very useful to students

J KERKETTA, S J

Khrist mein Nawikaran. By R H LESSER *Ajmer, St Anselm's Press*, 1980 Pp 75 Rs 2

This book in Hindi is the result of renewal seminars organised by the author among the simple Bhil people of Jaipur-Ajmer diocese As an experienced diocesan director of community worship, catechesis and evangelisation, the author is aware of the need of the Hindi speaking world and succeeds to convey the Vatican II message on renewal in a way that will appeal to them

He explores the possibility of renewal in different areas of faith from inter-religious dialogue, ecclesiology, sacraments, prayer, marriage and family life, to eucharistic celebration and daily Bible study After having established the uniqueness of Christ and the need for renewal to be centred on him, he exposes the place of non-Christian religions in the history of salvation A chapter is devoted to the theme of prayer, explaining it as adoration, love, thanksgiving, joy, petition and repentance The sacraments are understood as community worship deeply rooted in life Baptism makes us participate in the kingly, priestly and prophetic function of Christ Having explained the personal and social dimensions of sin and reconciliation, the author goes on to show the human, divine and Christian reasons for reconciliation Marriage is a holy, all embracing and loving unity between man and woman It is instituted by God, has love as its foundation and Christ as its centre The author deals at length on the meaning of holy Mass and shows ways and means towards people's active participation in the eucharistic celebration Finally he shows the primary importance of the Word of God and devotes a chapter to explaining how to make it part of one's personal life

Though the book is short and simple, it will be used with profit not only by the people but also by teachers, catechists, seminar and camp directors, and even by priests desirous to guide others on the theme of renewal

J KERKETTA, S.J.

Donon ek Tan By AMALADASS *Ranchi, Dharmik Sahitya Samiti*, 1980 Pp x-196 Rs 10

In his book, *Jeewan Chauraha*, the author's effort had been to help students make a correct choice in life, but he had left the vast area of married life untouched In the book under review, he specifically treats of married and family life Thus, this book is, in a way, the continuation and completion of the one mentioned above It consists of two parts In the first part, made up of two chapters, the author treats of life in creation, and then explains marriage as a social, religious and sacramental reality,

Continued on p 170

Cum permissu superiorum

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Vidyajyoti

JOURNAL OF THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Tribal Church and Evangelisation

Religions in Liberation Theology

Mark through Marx

MAY-JUNE 1982

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In This Issue

The membership of Christian Communities in India is by and large predominantly composed of people belonging to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, that is, to the oppressed sections of Indian society This should not, especially today, cause dismay or even surprise, for, as we have come to know better, the Gospel is preferentially addressed to the poor, the *anawim* of Yahweh are of all people those best prepared to receive and to respond to the Good News Yet the question has often been asked, and is still being asked, whether a Church with a markedly tribal image is not more a liability than an asset in terms of the evangelization of Indian society at large No, answers Fr A VAN EXEM in an article entitled "The Tribal Church and the Evangelization of Hindu India" Not all the ideas of the author are the most conventional He is convinced in fact that the evangelization of Indian society rests for a great part in the hands of the tribal Church The hour has come for them to reach out to the higher sections: they have the manpower for it and their experience of the Christian faith equips them with a message that will appeal to other groups as well

We published in our last issue the first instalment of the position paper delivered by Fr A PIERIS at the EATWOT Conference held in New Delhi last August, the second part of the paper follows here. The author stresses the need for an Asian Liberation Theology Such a theology will have to combine the social, the cultural and the religious dimensions, the three cannot be separated He shows the potential for social liberation enshrined in revolutionary movements that have originated from non-Christian religions and advocates an inter-religious approach to human liberation A common search for liberation is, he insists, the primary task of inter-religious dialogue He writes : "Theology, as God-talk or God's talk is not necessarily the universally valid starting point or the direct object, or the only basis of an inter-religious collaboration in the Third World *Liberation, however,* is "

Fr J VOLCKAERT contributes a short but critical account of Fernando Belo's book, *A Materialist Reading of the Gospel of Mark*, recently published in English translation

The Tribal Church and the Evangelization of Hindu India

A. VAN EXEM, S.J.

NOT long ago, an article on "Evangelization in the Context of India" raised the following question

> By and large, Christians are identified in most parts of India as scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, most of whom belong to the category of the poor and the marginalised in our society Obviously our preference should be for the poor and the down-trodden, and if the Spirit leads us to them, we should follow him At the same time, one wonders today whether an almost exclusive identification with this group will not constitute an obstacle for the other sections of the Indian society and will not prevent them from appreciating the Gospel and joining the Church One asks whether we are not turning away from the bulk of Hindu society by making ourselves a tribal Church, and whether the Church itself is not getting marginalised, thereby losing its opportunity and possibility to preach the Gospel in the mainstream of national life [1]

The author of the article is well aware that the evangelizing agent is not a selected group, say, the hierarchy, or the priests and religious, or the catechists, but the Church as a whole He addresses his question to the Church of India As a matter of fact, India counts a certain number of local Churches consisting mainly of Tribals If Christian Tribals in their homeland take inculturation to heart, no one can take it amiss Today, Tribals and Harijans stand in the limelight At least in some areas the Church may thus be said to project a tribal image This is especially so in the North, where, besides Tribals and Harijans, autochtonous Christians are few Outsiders may thus, rightly or wrongly, identify the Church with a community of Tribals. The point is now whether this tribal image will be a help or a hindrance to the bulk of Hindu society recognizing her message as relevant to them

The author does not call into doubt the vocation of the many Indian missionaries who have left their home to work in other parts of the country There is no enquiry whether the Tribals or anyone else have entertained mistaken policies, but simply a hint that an evalua-

1 D S AMALORPAVADASS, "Evangelization in the Context of India", *Indian Theological Studies*, June 1980

tion of the present situation is called for. If it is true that the image the Tribals project rubs off on the Church as a whole, this image must be clarified. Yet, more importantly· the share the Tribals themselves can contribute to the evangelizing efforts of the Church should not be overlooked.

Several subsidiary questions arise· Is the Christian Tribal a true exponent of the Gospel ? Is he equipped to extend his evangelizing efforts beyond the tribal fold ? How, in this context, is the adoption into the liturgy of tribal languages, art and customs to be viewed ? Will Hindu-Tribal relations ever evolve in such a way that large sections of the Hindu population may eventually open themselves to the influence of a tribal Church ?

No one is a prophet time will tell Yet, the tribal Churches are facing the future now The question is a welcome challenge, and its discussion timely Too long, perhaps, has a status quo been taken for granted

Who is the Tribal Convert?

Tribals are mostly recent converts To the question, "Who is the tribal convert ?", the ready-made answer on the lips of many is a "rice-Christian" Tribals will indeed by hard put to it to present the Gospel in a credible way to people who labour under such prejudice

Vested interests want to keep the Tribals subdued they are out to denigrate whatever might make them better aware of their human dignity and value These exploiters are not, however, the only ones to regard tribal converts as rice-Christians many well-meaning people, including, strange to say, many who have had contact with Christians or even are Christians themselves, talk along the same line.

In bygone days, from Vedic times until recently, otherwise religious minded people needed to justify the repression and violence imposed by their community on the Tribals This generated a deep-seated contempt. Insult dies harder than injury though the present age no longer sanctions whatever exploitation continues to exist, the common Indian does not escape the legacy of history and even now generally holds the Tribal in contempt. His helplessness may earn him commiseration, not respect.

This contempt is covered with a veneer of science and goodwill For want of more demanding scholarship, anthropology can still with impunity present a caricature of the tribal religion as if it were merely a low-grade sort of Hinduism Being familiar with neither popular Hinduism nor tribal religion, Catholic scientists do not have the tools

to contradict them and play to their tune: when exploring the great religions of India, they limit themselves to the well organised systems of thought and disregard the creeds which, though less well documented, live on in the hearts of millions of people. Missiologists may thus remain unaware of the former religion of the converts and of their spiritual aspirations: they keep harping on the socio-economic motivations with which, as a result of a life-situation, the spiritual aspiration were not rarely mixed Others find no better way to promote post-Vatican II theology than to paint all former missionary endeavour as "bribery to save souls from hell" Others again, in an attempt to present the Church as a sign of Christ's charity, write of the poor as if they had no spiritual need, or — in a more secularizing fashion — stress the urgency of liberating them to the extent of obscuring their desire for deliverance from the root-cause of evil

These various views are not meant to be derogatory, but their upshot is that 'the plate of rice' which in the mind of the reader was supposed to effect conversions is at best replaced with 'the right' to such a plate Large sections of the Indian population, then, are confirmed in their opinion that the Church with her schools and hospitals allures unsuspecting Tribals into her proselitizing nets Worse as far as the tribal Christians themselves are concerned, it pre-empties their profession of faith of its credibility Contempt indeed is not harmless

We obtain a truer picture of the tribal converts if we see them against the background of their traditional religion They are people who have found a new and better approach to the God they had venerated since centuries They used to thank him and ask for his blessings, but he would ever be far The tribe stood in between the divine and man God would not really love the tribesman as an individual but only care for him at birth, marriage and death, the moments of life when he was important as a link in the chain of the tribe The individual person thus became expendable No wonder that Christianity is welcomed by him for revealing God as a Father.

The traditional religion set a second barrier between the divine and man The Tribals have an unshakeable belief in man's survival after death The spirits of the deceased live on in an invisible world, co-extensive with our visible one God, who in primordial times had entrusted nature to man, leaves much of its present day-to-day management to spirits

There are not only ancestral but also guardian spirits, survivals of the sinful humans who lived at the time of the Fall. They are understood to have vowed obedience to the Creator, and the villagers

have entered into a pact with them provided they appease them by seasonal sacrifice, they feel fairly safe Yet these spirits retain their greedy nature, and the individual is at their mercy they plague him to extract further 'feedings'. During the last few centuries, moreover, the proximity of the Hindus created a new category of spirits Hindus, in tribal opinion, do not care for their dead they do not bring back their 'shade' to their homes, but let them roam about to do evil. These spirits are held to be powerful and vicious

Many a Tribal, then, revolts at the injustices of his spirit-world. Many come to feel — well before they appreciate Christ as a historical person — how Christianity allows man to bypass these intermediaries to link him directly with the divine They come to Christ as to the Mediator and Son of God

Meanwhile, the convert being poor, it is his bounden duty to try and obtain justice in this world as well as in the invisible one If then, as a Christian, he acquires greater awareness of his capabilities and at the same time becomes more self-critical, if he learns to take more responsibility and is open to progressive leadership, if he farms more intelligently and sends his children to school, all this is construed by his critics as further proof of the material benefits by which he was allured.

The misconceptions that are rife about tribal Christians cannot but handicap them in their apostolic efforts This, however, ought not to deter them from taking up the challenge Their very survival as Tribals proves that in the course of their history they have side-stepped many a hurdle that could not be removed

Equipped to Evangelize

The Christian Tribals as a group seem to be endowed with such qualities as make for excellent evangelizers Contrary to what is often thought, Christian Tribals have not broken off with something dear to them, but rather with inhibiting beliefs such as in witchcraft, evil eye and vicious spirits, things they hated anyway They have discovered a freedom that brings a new manhood and a healthy pride they have joined a new and world-wide religion. However long it may take for this new identity to pervade all their social and economic attitudes, they have become modern men, open to progress They have the vigour of the young

They are not rigid in their attitudes At the time of their conversion, their faith consisted in a commitment to a way of life rather than an adherence to a particular doctrine. They stand open to the life of

the Church. No wonder that their Church flourishes with numerous vocations, including vocations to contemplative and missionary life The Tribals come to their own in a Christianity that is alive and generous

Though they learn to give due appreciation to the value and dignity of the individual, they retain their traditional community feeling. They do not aim at being socially different from their non-Christian brethren; they would rather bring their milieu along with them They keep their spirit of solidarity, the greatest specifically tribal instinct, and desire to share their gift of faith with their brethren

In their traditonal set-up, they were used to leave little to the initiative of specialists decisions were taken in common and each individual was responsible to the group for executing them. Desiring to re-unite their brethren in their new faith, they do not relegate evangelization to the specialist they rather count on the effort of the community They convey a commitment rather than disseminate a doctrine They do not believe in sudden bursts of indoctrination that would be resisted, but rather go, as they put it, 'slowly-slowly', drop by drop daily dropping little hints, casually, about their new life and their desire to share it They do not put their trust in drawn-out dialogue, but ardently believe in symbiosis

One visualizes many a local Church whose faithful are exhorted to practise this gentle apostolate The Tribals, however, have an uncanny way of organizing what may appear to be an essentially disorganized approach They had always relied on panchayats, but now, since Christianity stresses personal effort, they feel the need for them all the more Every age and sex group must have its panchayat at village, parish, vicariate and diocesan level, at which social, economic and spiritual problems are freely discussed Where this system is made use of for evangelization, they monthly enquire how each one is faring, recounting anecdotes, voicing hopes, not rarely reporting success Evangelization thus becomes a teamwork in which the specialist plays a subsidiary role the catechist is made to catechise the neophytes, and the priest, animator by word and deed, is called upon to administer the sacraments The common man is aware that the spreading of the message depends on him Daily thinking out how to formulate it piece-meal goes a long way to deepen out his faith

The Tribal, then, is a true exponent of the Gospel. He spreads the message methodically and efficiently to his own tribe, and increasingly to other tribes His Church is well equipped to evangelize tens of millions of tribal Indians The question remains open whether she

can apply the same methods to contact groups of Hindus. In this connection, the inculturation practised by the tribal Church may be seen as an obstacle.

Culture Change, Inculturation and Evangelization

Tribals are practical men they normally do not in advance set artificial limits to their evangelizing action They spread the message, and hope for the best that it will turn the heart and mind of the hearers to God, and eventually lead to their total adherence to Christ Since man's relationship with the divine is an important aspect of his culture, evangelization as practised by Tribals aims, anthropologically speaking, at culture change This is all the more so when we deal, not just with an individual, but with a group We therefore discuss inculturation in the light of the general dynamics of culture change.

The various facets of a culture can be divided into two groups those that are focal, and those that rather remain on the periphery. We describe each group in the context of tribal Chotanagpur This will allow us to discuss two forms of inculturation, and their respective relevance to the evangelization of the Tribals and to the building up of their Church We shall thus come to their relative importance in a situation in which the Tribals themselves act as evangelizers

The *peripheral* facets of a culture are those that are taken for granted. They may be important, even fundamental; the belief in a God Creator is to the Tribals so self-evident that they need not give it much of a thought The community may treasure such facets dearly the Tribals love to sing and dance and drum, but there is no occasion to make an issue out of it These facets remain *at the periphery of the community's attention*

Contrariwise, the *focal* aspects of culture are those that stand *at the centre of all preoccupation*, and generate heated feelings when in the 18th century and later alien intruders were robbing the land, reducing the Tribals to serfdom, emotions ran high Any sphere of cultural life, whether social, religious or economic, may have one or more key issues the intrusion of landlords upset the earlier economy, the loaning system, the village polity, social relationships, and gave rise, as we mentioned above, to the belief in a new kind of spirits. As was the case in Chotanagpur, when these various vital issues are associated with each other, they reinforce the cultural focus considerably

Change may occur either at the periphery or at the focus of culture. *A peripheral culture change would rather be a drift* Tribals started frequenting certain Hindu festivals, gradually took a greater

part in them, followed them up with celebrations in their own villages, and slowly came to consider these festivals as their own. In many places the loss of the Oraon language is typical: the children, while playing, pick up the dialect of another ethnic group, it so happens that after two or three generations the mother-tongue is lost.

It is, however, *at the focus of culture that ancient values are questioned and new experiments made* Last century, when the landlords and their handimen had fully entrenched themselves, there were bloody revolts, agrarian and political agitations, recourse to courts of law, emigration and simply submission; none of these could be sustained and frustration grew To deal with the spirits, there arose a new class of diviners, the attempt was in vain any illness would call up the spectre of ever more spirits Each of these experiments affected the culture deeply, but all were rejected *A culture change will not be satisfactory and lasting unless it gives an answer*, whether pragmatic or emotional, *that extends to the cultural focus as a whole*, i e, to all the questions it raises

Evangelization will always be incarnation· bringing Christ into a culture, and thereby altering it As culture change occurs either at the focus of a culture or at its periphery, so the *inculturation of the message can also take two forms focal or peripheral*

The missionaries found a culture in turmoil After some initial hesitation they joined the fray and tried to defend the Tribals in their agrarian struggle At the same time, since they aimed at direct evangelization, they proclaimed bluntly Throw out your devils, become Christians ! Indeed, never having heard about the niceties of inculturation, they mistook the tribal spirits for 'devils'. They also failed to practise what would later be called 'adaptation', but went about in their foreign dress, singing hymns on European tunes, and even banned for their adherents catchy drums from the dancing ground. these reminded them of the 'devils'

The message is being inculturated into a culture in the measure Christ is made present in it in a recognizable form This may be attempted by conforming to the peripheral facets of the culture· it is a slow and painful process, open to mistakes on the part of the evangelizer and misinterpretations on that of the evangelized The test of inculturation will always be: is Christ getting recognized for what he really is ? The Chotanagpur missionaries *inculturated the message right at the focus* of all adivasi concern Fighting the agrarian struggle, they proclaimed a Christ who does away with the fear of spirits, and hence with all fears They put Christ at the very core of the culture of the day.

The message was heard loud and clear. Turning to Christianity became an acceptable way of dealing with vital problems Circumstances had not changed substantially: it would take another generation before Government would enact satisfactory agrarian legislation; illness as well as landlords remained It was in the tribal culture itself that the change had taken place· the identity of the converts had been altered at its deepest level. Having found a new way to God, they could reject the spirits outright and, at the same time, take socially relevant action against the outrages of the landlords They wore their scapulars and medals as one would rally behind a flag, and sang with gusto, or massacred, their European tunes Little did they worry about the loss of a dancing drum

We cannot burden this article with an outline of the history of a mission The reader who is cognizant of it will note that whenever the missionaries moved away from the cultural focus, evangelization suffered Similarly, when in spite of the help extended to them in agrarian matters, the evangelized felt threatened in a vital aspect of their culture, as in their belonging to the tribe, they withdrew Further, as the agrarian problem moved out of the cultural focus, evangelization slowed down Very gradually the need for education and for better agriculture became a more dominant concern though the Church took action in these matters, she no longer associated it with the rejection of the evil spirits that remain in the focus of attention even today, she no longer gave an answer to the cultural focus as a whole Having, yielded a solid and committed Christianity, the first phase of evangelization gradually came to an end

A culture always tends to be a balanced whole This balance gets temporarily upset by the problems raised as well as by the answers given at its focus As the new values pervade the system, *peripheral changes occur until a new balance is reached* The culture as a whole becomes transformed and the society can once more be at peace in a renewed identity It is at this stage that peripheral inculturation plays its role Over the years, tribal bards have created variations on their ancient tunes, and the drum, once discarded as an instrument of the 'devil', has made its way back, step by step, well beyond the dancing ground, up to the altar of the Lord

This form of inculturation is not a return to a static past. It rather consists in the incarnation of Christianity into an ever changing present. It exposes every aspect of life to the influence of the faith, and at the same time expresses and concretizes this faith in the context of an existential situation. It therefore grows from within and moves at its own pace. It tends to be pluralistic: it must reinterpret Christ for

the illiterate farmer as well as for the doctor in the city. In spite of this, it forms a united whole: tribal solidarity channels its different moves into the direction of the same basic tribal identity.

We have shown how focal inculturation has contributed to the evangelization of the Tribals, and peripheral inculturation to the deepening of their Christian life. They are now evangelizers in their own right The two forms of inculturation have lost none of their respective validity

Focal inculturation made that the converts were deeply committed The Gospel was good news to them in a very literal sense It was an answer to their cry of despair They spoke of it with friends and relatives, they were full of it It became the talk of the bazaars It spread like fire This news was so unhoped for that it could hardly be believed repeatedly people came from day-journeys far, full of hope and yet distrustful, to check on the truth of rumours they had heard

At present, in a second wave of evangelization, focal inculturation is again the method by which the community spreads the message: in their daily contacts the burning topics of the day allow the Christians to show others how they understand and handle their problems Their new approach to the divine is particularly relevant when illness and its causes, and death are being discussed They bring Christ into the key issues of life

Peripheral inculturation is going on at the same time It is not primarily aimed at the evangelization of others It could even, if practised unjudiciously, harm evangelization if instead of being encouraged and guided, it were to be imposed by specialists, or to develop into an issue within the Church, it would easily result in alienating the Christians from their culture They would then focus their attention on that which their brethren leave at the periphery, unconsciously stressing non-issues, and thus obscuring the clarity of the message Peripheral inculturation is at its best when it arises as it were by itself, and remains where it belongs, at the periphery.

On the other hand, this second form of inculturation is not irrelevant to evangelization It counter-balances the divisive element which the new religion introduces into the common tribal culture Further, it is a natural expression of the sharing of Christian life Even more important is the fact that it changes the spirit of the evangelizer himself through it he not only gives himself fully to the faith, but comes to possess it securely. His belonging to the tribe may suffice for him to take up the evangelization of his own brethren; but, if ever he is to go beyond his own to other ethnic groups, he requires a firmer

base of confidence An individual tribal missionary may acquire this greater security and confidence by virtue of his vocation, formation and personal conviction If, however, the tribal Church as a whole is to be the evangelizing agent and to inculturate the message outside her own milieu into another society, a basic prerequisite seems to be that she first be fully tribal Could, then, an inculturated tribal Church open a new avenue where some earlier approaches to reach the bulk of Hindu society have failed, or have not yet proved their viability ?

Inculturation: An Obstacle ?

The question referred to at the beginning of this article rightly shows concern for the other sections of the Indian society" Especially in the Northern half of India, few experiments at evangelizing Hindus have been made in recent times or have reached more than a very restricted number of people In most areas, far from constituting a Hindu Church (if we may use this term as parallel to a 'tribal Church') and a base for further expansion, the number of caste Hindus who have accepted the Gospel is too small to survive socially and too diverse to be called a 'section' of society One cannot help thinking of the post-war evangelization of Japan, where bright promises have been belied within one generation though the number of converts was once considerable, though they were well equipped, well instructed and committed, they were too isolated from each other to form a socially viable Church and assure continuity

A 'section' of society, in the present Indian context, would not be a geographical unit or a particular class, but rather a caste or groups of castes Castes have their roots in the rural areas Many live widely dispersed in the midst of others The effective evangelization of a caste would suppose contact with them over a large area To establish such contact, the *guru* approach has been tried, but this demanding apostolate seems so far to be handicapped by a lack of personnel One wonders whether the more diffuse community method which the Tribals practise among their own could not also be applied to a caste section

The doctrine of the Church that all the baptised partake in the Church's apostolic mission ought to be taken literally it has too often been reduced to a mere call to 'prayer and good example', or restricted to a few laymen especially trained in Christian life and catechetics Ought not all the faithful to spread the message, also by word of mouth ? And could they not be conscientized to do so through regular sharing regarding methods ? Contacting a caste, however, would suppose that they live close to it, and in Northern India most

autochtonous Churches spread in the villages are either harijan or tribal. If, then, the tribal Church has already gathered considerable expertise in the application of the 'contact and enquiry' method, could she not also become a pioneer in applying it to Hindus as well ?

It is at this point that the problem of tribal inculturation arises No one registers a message that comes to him in a foreign language 'Language' is not just the tongue one speaks: it includes all the ways by which a person communicates with others Will then not the very inculturation which we deem necessary for the Tribals to be able to spread their message to the Hindus, at the same time prevent the latter from receiving it ? We must have a closer look at the village culture.

There live in the tribal belt a great variety of ethnic groups There are the main tribes, often more than one in the same village, not rarely speaking different languages Other groups, as various artisans, are either Tribals or former Tribals Others again are Harijans, or lower or higher caste people Each of these groups has a culture of its own, yet all lead the same village life

A caste can be looked upon from the top of the social ladder It then appears in its relation to sanskritized Hinduism, as a sub-culture of the great Hindu structure A caste, like a tribe, is endogamous and has its own eating habits, religious observances, perhaps even a traditional occupation Adherence to these customs appears as a matter of routine, yet is held to be of vital importance any infringement of them carries heavy sanctions Compliance expresses one's loyalty to the group, necessary to preserve its identity· the more spread out the group is, the more it emphasises cohesion It is in this sphere that over the centuries efforts were made at sanskritization, formerly the only avenue to social advancement

There is also such a thing as a village culture common to both caste and tribe The various groups have witnessed each other's song and dance; there have been cross-influences Even where a tribe speaks its own language, a more common one is used by all for inter-group communication All depend on the same vagueries of nature, the same price structure, the same officialdom Vital matters are the same for all education, crop failure, division of land holdings, corruption in public life Tribals are heard to remark that some descendants of their former petty oppressors, having less farming experience, are fast losing ground. Not rarely all are exploited by the same money-lenders We may well add that in times of distress many feel plagued by the same fear of spirits as the Tribals, popular Hinduism has retained many a tribal trait It may then be said that in many respects all form a common front

In proclaiming the message to a caste, het Christian Tribals would not try to ingratiate themselves to them by adopting their eating habits: this would only divert the attention from the message, it would moreover arouse the suspicion that they merely want to better their own lot, or, more irrealistically, that they wish to draw the caste into the tribal community The caste would resist such ouvertures and defend its separateness

The Tribals would select a caste that is likely to be responsive and make it a point to meet its members frequently Village life offers scope for mutual help the Tribals would offer their collaboration to the caste and ask for theirs in return They would, as they do with their co-Tribals, insert the message in the current issues of life and topics of conversation, with the definite purpose of attracting them to the faith The women would gain entrance into the homes of the caste people when they are ill, saying a prayer before leaving, and taking interest in their children The youth would befriend their companions They would do so, not in one or a dozen, but in the hundreds of villages where the particular caste is living At no time would it feel threatened

The message of the Tribals would be respected In their renewed identity they face the future with confidence and even exercise a certain leadership Their monthly panchayats make them better informed The Christians are more likely than others to have some simple literature about farming and, as often as not, it is the Christian tribal teacher who teaches the Hindu child to read and write his own language The Hindus seek more and more their socio-economic betterment in education Since in the educational field the tribal Christians are forging ahead, there is no reason why they should not take the lead also in religious matters Many focal issues can show forth the relevance of their religion· inserted into these and coming to the other ethnic group in the context of education, the message of the Tribals would carry weight

At this point, an objection may be made If it is all that simple, why has no such attempt been made so far ? In the framework of the feudal system, when the Tribals were the underdog in all respects, effective evangelical contact was precluded A generation after Independence, old inhibitions are fading Meanwhile, the peripheral inculturation of the Christian religion has built up the necessary confidence Time is ripe

One problem however, remains: If only a few caste families come over, the group will feel threatened in its identity Villagers put this in more concrete terms If those people join the Church, where will they marry their sons and daughters ? In other words· they will be ostra-

cized by their community It is for this reason that a caste must be contacted in all the villages of the area, so that the change of mind which leads to conversion may grow simultaneously in all, and that those who first receive baptism may keep the sympathy of the group The tribal Church must consciously take up the challenge of this evangelization movement She must make a decisive and clear resolution to undertake this new venture with concerted efforts, selecting such groups as are more likely to be responsive Once the decision is taken, it can be left to the ordinary panchayat system with its monthly enquiry to set many thousands of evangelizers to work As one group begins to accept the message, another could be taken up

The time is ripe The question, "Are we not turning away from the bulk of Hindu society by making ourselves a tribal Church ?", calls for an answer

The movement would not be restricted to villages The same ethnic groups would be sought out in local cities as well One would expect their members there to follow the lead of their rural relatives. In other cities of North India where tribal Christians form sizeable groups, they might communicate their evangelizing zeal as well as their method to other local Churches

A Tribal Message· Acceptable to India ?

A few centuries ago the feudal system prevailed Purity and sanskritization stood in the locus of Hindu culture and was the key not only to religious but also to social status, and even to economic advancement Many experiments were made, each group asserting its own purity and insisting on segregation from those it considered inferior An endless proliferation of castes resulted Hindu society as a whole, however, remained stable each caste had its own economic function assigned to it by birth

During the same period, a saying was coined in Europe *Cuius regio, illius religio*, 'The one who rules the region is master of its religion as well' Coming from Europe to India, de Nobili or de Britto could well assume that if the top castes were converted, others would follow Their approach was anthropologically sound they inculturated Christianity on a high plane, projecting it as an ideal for the whole of India to strive toward

The feudal system has been artificially prolonged beyond its time by the colonial regime The struggle for independence and Independence itself, however, have drastically changed the focus of Indian culture India modernizes with a vengeance

Democracy demands a literate rural population, technology a better educated working class. In an industrializing society, labour obtains bargaining power. the voice of the socially weak grows stronger day by day. Urbanization leads to social independence and mobility It is no longer safe to assume that a top caste can by mere accident of birth retain its dominance much longer, especially if it keeps isolating itself from the common man.

The ancient power structure strains to reassert its dominance, but stands with its back to the wall There are problems of law and order, anarchical and secessionist movements, killings of Harijans and force-able occupation of land, the dowry system and burnings of women There is corruption and mud slinging Far from restoring a balance of culture by marginal adjustments, sanskritization has run into a dead end. the very division of castes to which it gave rise has become one of the most adverse factors in coping with the country's problems

Unable to suppress the voice of the weak, the power structure offers socialization as a palliative It cannot afford to admit that the struggle between caste and class, the new focus of culture, has a spiritual and religious dimension It thus refuses to envisage a comprehensive answer to the problem When conversions of Harijans can no longer be accounted for by 'foreign hands' or 'foreign money', when economic sanctions as deprivation of scheduled caste status fail to retain them in the Hindu fold, their desertion is being ascribed to mere social reasons such as their being debarred from temples and wells It is not conceivable to caste Hindus that Harijans might be religiously motivated when they reject a divinity that assigns them a sub-human status and makes them suffer for supposed misdeeds committed in a previous birth In spite of the name given to them, 'Children of God', it cannot be admitted that they seek a God who accepts them. The power structure must uphold its contempt at all costs if it ever conceded that Harijans have valid religious aspirations, caste determinism would stand exposed as concocted by human interests and its purity as a decoy.

The diverse experiments in 'socialization' that spring from the new focus of culture remain too superficial in so far as they lack in religious dimension A more radical change is sought the struggle will go an until a religious answer is found on which, on the one hand, the lower castes can base their socio-economic aspirations, while, on the other, the higher ones suffer the loss of their privileged status.

Seen against this background, the inculturation practised by de Britto and de Nobili, focal in their time, would now be peripheral it

might still attract the attention of some individuals or help eventual converts to express their new faith in their ancient language. It would no longer touch key issues or be an effective method of bringing Christ to large sections of Hindus. Christ becomes relevant, not by the similarities one finds in him, but by the difference he makes. He is the One who brings conversion of mind and heart.

It is also against this background that we must judge the possible relevance of a Christian tribal message

The Tribal respects all human beings as equal before God He keeps his tribe pure by observing certain taboos, but this purity is an internal matter it does not look down on others as impure The Christian puts this in a more positive perspective that of the fatherhood of God By its very preaching, the tribal community would spread the desire that all communicate together, step by step dismantling divisions, yet without prejudice to the self-identity of each group The numerous vocations to priestly or religious life would challenge all to lead a dedicated life They would at the same time set an example to those Christian Churches which are still at pains to overcome the last vestiges of caste

Tribals honour their women Various taboos indicate that they do not consider them as similar to men male and female have their distinct functions, but these are held to be equal in importance By reversing the dowry system, the Tribals show their appreciation for the enrichment the bride brings to a family, and they pay for her a 'price' The Christians do not lose this esteem the percentage of girls who receive education as compared to that of the boys, is higher among them than in most other groups As the education and emancipation of the Indian women progresses, the message of the Tribals may gain in relevance· the leading classes may one day well be those which honour their womenfolk , The section of society that would keep them in bondage and therefore uneducated will unavoidably lose in importance.

It must not be forgotten that women are the mainstay of religion in most persuasions, also in Hinduism As educated Hindu girls would come into contact with their tribal friends, they might one day well envy their freedom The Christian girls are neither prude nor proud. They are conscious of their dignity It has been remarked that they make excellent nurses. their patients become temporarily their brothers or sisters At a time when these and their families wage a struggle for life, they are surrounded by messages of love.

The Tribals are reputably honest. Even if some find it hard to keep their integrity when faced with corrupt surroundings, they have

something straight about them In a favourable environment they return to their pristine virtue. Plantation as well as factory managers recognize this, and not rarely prefer them to other labour. The Tribals like justice, and they like order. The Church, we hope, will always keep a responsible stance in such matters.

The Paschal mystery has a human appeal of its own It takes into itself and elevates all suffering and joy It not only gives meaning to illness and death, but also a value It holds the certain hope that nothing will be wasted but everything lead to resurrection and union with God The Christian joy of the Tribals may thus teach the lower castes to overcome their disabilities without hatred, and the higher ones to seek their purity in the service of mankind

Would such messages be rejected because they are too radical ? None but a radical solution can cure the country's ills The alternative would be to eradicate all religiosity in the vain hope of creating a materialistic paradise of equality on earth. This would be far more radical, and, in the countries where it has been attempted, it has caused untold suffering and proved futile

Christ is relevant to India To say that the Gospel would lose its relevance if it came through the tribal community would betray a defeatism which no Indian must tolerate this country can and will one day become an integrated nation It is exactly integration that the tribal message is about, and contempt that India must overcome The growing and integrating Christian tribal community is a sign of hope

Conclusions

Our option for the poor is not mere condescension to their misery We follow the Spirit of Christ who rejected the way of the proud, the same Spirit as was active in the early Church when the freedom of the Gospel was announced to slaves and soldiers alike The fishermen of Galilee, who never gave up their Jewishness, probably were better apostles than the Roman emperor could ever have been The Church goes to the poor because they can best testify to the riches of Christ

The tribal Church must by no means give up her particular identity, but rather continue to inculturate her faith into the tribal culture of the day. She must especially cultivate her sense of solidarity and her community approach Her members, however, must give up whatever insularity is left and integrate ever faster into the Indian mainstream. They must, therefore, carry on working for their own progress in all fields.

The tribal Church must in no way feel inferior but be confident that she has her own contribution to make to the Church of India and to the country as a whole She must not show this by wordy self-assertion, but she must reject all inhibitions and go out, beyond herself, to other ethnic groups We propose that in the near future all tribal Churches discuss, as addressed to them, the call of Christ to evangelize 'all the nations' and, wherever they are already sufficiently established, start taking practical steps in that direction The Church of India may then follow the tribal lead and discover better that the evangelization of the non-Christians is not the preserve of a few, be they priests or laymen, but the task of all, in their individual capacity and as members of their local Churches

History does sometimes repeat itself In ancient times the Aryan culture borrowed freely from former autochtonous societies to evolve Hinduism If at present its exposure to a modern situation is shaking up the country, it may well have to grope its way back to its tribal roots to discover some of the values it had lost along the way.

Let the tribal Church take up the challenge

Non-Christian Religions and Cultures in Third World Theology

Aloysius PIERIS, S J

Part II

TOWARDS A THIRD-WORLD THEOLOGY OF RELIGION

I. *The Religious Phenomenon in the Third-World: Its Anatomy*

EVERY theologian should be alerted to the fact that a substantial amount of information regarding religions and cultures in the Third World are gathered, processed and distributed by Euro-American Research Centres The First World still enjoys the monopoly of resources required for such studies money and media, academic prestige and personnel, so that even the highly acclaimed 'participatory observation method' in Anthropology has been unmasked as another arm of Western dominance[36] The occidentalist bias which Liberation Theology was shown to have absorbed from a tradition traceable to Marx and Barth (see Part One) is only the tip of the iceberg There are deeper pre-dispositions acquired by all of us — the present writer included — in the course of our intellectual training, since we are all dependent on these same sources for our understanding of the religious phenomenon in its global magnitude For as Evans-Pritchard has himself noted, generations of writers on religion (Taylor, Frazer, Malinowski, Durkheim, Freud and their followers) in their sincere search for Truth, were only reacting against the religion of their upbringing [37] In the face of their attempts to explain religion, by explaining it away, theologians like Barth tried to save Christianity by lifting it above the realm of religion, indirectly offering a biblico-theological prop to their anti-religion theories

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36 For a forceful exposition of this thesis see E T JACOB-PANDIAN, "Anthropological Fieldwork, Empathy and the Crisis of the Apocalyptic Man", *Man In India* 55/4 October-December 1975, pp 281-297 See also Epeli HAN'OFA, "Anthropology and Pacific Islanders", *Man In India*, 55/1, January-March 1975, pp 57-66

37 Evans PRITCHARD, "Religion and the Anthropologists", in *Practical Anthropology* 19 (1972), pp 193, 205, quoted in C E Stipe, art infra cit, p 120

A recent scholar, C. E. Stipe, has diagnosed the malaise of Western Anthropologists as "functionalism", which tends to gloss over religion as something redundant in the cultures they study[38] Taking the focal aspect of religion to be something outside the natural, human experience, they perceive the rite and not the system of meaning and beliefs, the social relations without due regard to the world-view which religions provide. An interesting case cited is that of Sierksma accusing Lanternari of leaving Anthropology for Theology,[39] because the latter merely observed Christianity to be 'Transcendent' unlike the Messianic Movements which are more interested in human salvation on earth[40] Marxist interpretation of *Mau Mau* as purely Kenyan nationalism or Melanesian Cargo Cults as purely economic phenomena shares in this Western reductionism which, according to Stipe, is precisely what hinders Western Anthropologists from assessing *the role of religion in relation to culture change*[41]

Is not the same bias keeping the theologian (liberationist or inculturationist) from perceiving religion in positive terms of liberation-struggles and revolutionary change ? Hence we recommend that a critical discernment be exercised in perusing available studies on religions and that field-work on this subject be undertaken afresh from within the Third-World perspective of "peoples struggling for integral human liberation" It is with this forewarning that I wish to begin describing the anatomy of the religious phenomenon in the Third World.

The intricate network of Religions and Cultures that spreads across the Third World, baffles the theologian as much as it does the anthropologist To do more than trace its major contours would be, therefore, unpragmatic within the space allotted to me Nor should we delay on definitions of religion and culture, an academic pastime that has bred confusion in the West We who breathe religion as our normal atmosphere would rather go by the first intuitive and experiential grasp of what it means in life Therefore, without formulating definitions for ourselves we can still detect the ones that are wrong !

The first observation is that religion and culture coincide fully in tribal societies practically everywhere in the Third World Culture is the variegated expression of religion. But as religions meet each

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38. Claud E. STIPE, "The Role of Religion in Culture Change", *Christian Scholar's Review* X/2, 1981, pp 117ff.

39 F. SIERKSMA in *Current Anthropology* 6 (1965), p 455

40 Vittorio LANTERNARI, *The Religion of the Oppressed A Study of Modern Messianic Cults*, N Y. Mentor Books, 1963, p 312

41. C E. STIPE, art cit, p 121 For concrete examples, see ibid, pp. 124-128. Cf. also K ISHWARAN, art. supra cit, pp 80-82

other always in and through their respective cultural self-manifestations, there result subtle differentiations between 'religions' and the 'cultures'. *One might speak, thus, of several cultures within one religion* and, conversely, about many religions within one culture. The former case is exemplified in the three missionary religions, namely, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity (listed here in the descending order of cultural differentiation) As for cultures that accommodate several religions, we can cite a whole series of them, e g., Buddhism and Hinduism in Nepal, Taoism and Confucianism in China, Buddhism and Shintoism in Japan, or Hinduism and Islam in Java In some instances the culture of one religion relates to the other as host to a guest. Hence these terms possess a conceptual elasticity which the complexity of the reality has bequeathed to them For reasons that are implicit in our prefatory remarks above, we primarily speak of *religions* as the pivotal point of reference, and obliquely about culture.

This premised, let me attempt to sort out the various strands of *religiousness* that have been woven into the exquisite *cultural* fabric of the Third World. Actually one can pick up about three of them: the criss-crossing of racio-linguistic contours within the so-called scriptural religions must be mentioned first.

The so-called scriptural religions of the World have all taken their origin from three reservoirs of Asian spirituality, each having its own racio-linguistic idiom · the *Semitic* (Judaism, Islam and Christianity), the *Indian* (Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism) and the *Chinese* (Taoism, Confucianism) These streams of religiousness have not confined themselves to the neighbourhood of their sources, but have been meandering beyond their linguistic boundaries, even across the continents, thus flooding the world, and Asia in particular, with a plethora of hybrid cultures For instance, Islam's semitic religiosity pervades both the Malayo-Polynesian and the Indo-Aryan cultures of Indonesia and Pakistan respectively, while it also permeates many African tribes. Hinduism has a firm grip on the lives of both the Dravidian and Indo-Aryan peoples of India, besides serving as the subterranean foundation of many South East Asian civilizations. Buddhism, which preserves its original Indian format only in Sri Lanka, has shaped several cultures by allowing itself to be shaped by them, so that one hears of Ural-Altaic, Malayo-Polynesian, Sino-Tibetan, Japanese and Indo-Aryan versions of Buddhist 'culture'. Christianity too, can make a few modest claims in this regard.

The second type of cross-fertilization takes place between these religions and the tribal religions. As a matter of fact it coincides with

the process by which, as described above, a scriptural religion acquires citizenship in another linguistic zone. Regrettably, our theological manuals which deal with non-Christian religions focus mostly on these Scriptural Religions, or what Sociologists call "the Great Traditions" But the peasantry and the proletariat of the Third-World are, for the most part, bearers of a non-Scriptural or regionalized traditional religiosity, either *within* the framework of a major religion (so called 'popular Buddhism', 'popular Taoism', 'popular Hinduism' and, as in Latin America, 'popular religiosity') or *totally outside* any scriptural religion (e.g., tribal religions not yet proselytized by the former). This is why we appealed at the Asian Theological Consultation that due attention be paid to these religions,[42] the beliefs and practices of which have not frozen into written formulae but flow with the time, thus exhibiting *a flexibility essential for social change* This is the FIRST corollary we wish to underline here, for future reference

Since all "scriptural" religions began as oral traditions and since "traditional" religions of today are bound, sooner or later, to transfer their sacred heritage, too, into a written form, we prefer to fall back on two other words which we had coined to describe them on an earlier occasion *Metacosmic* (not to be confused with *acosmic*) and *Cosmic*, respectively[43] The former type of religion defines its soteriology in terms of a meta-cosmic "Beyond" which/who is capable of being internalized as the salvific "Within" of the human person, either through the Agapeic path of redeeming love or through the Gnostic way of liberating knowledge - this being the major difference between the Biblical religions and most non-Biblical ones The cosmic religions, on the other hand, as the word indicates, revolve round cosmic powers — normally rendered as 'gods', 'deities', or 'spirits' in English They refer to natural phenomena (often personified) as well as the spirits of past heroes and one's own ancestors, not excluding the 'departed souls' and the 'saints' in popular Christianity For this reason Confucianism is to be classed as a cosmic religion despite its Scriptural base Further, wherever the two species of religiosity have merged, the common people's genius has created a synthesis which a superficial observer mistakes for 'syncretism' That is why Richard Gombrich has suggested the word 'accretism' to describe it For, in the hybrid cultures that issue from this symbiosis, the *homo religiosus* learns to align his locally determined 'cosmic' concerns (food, harvest, rain and sunshine, floods and drought, health and sickness, life and death, marriage and

42 A. PIERIS, art cit., in note 2 above, p. 77
43 Ibid., p 78.

politics) with the soteriological orientation of his or her life towards a Metacosmic Beyond.[44] One welcomes, therefore the bi-disciplinary approach of Scripturists who take to anthropology (Dumont, Bechert, Gombrich, etc.) in order to respect the hermeneutical reciprocity between the Book and the Beliefs, Scripture and Tradition, the written text and the living context, For the popular hermeneusis of ancient lore reveals the people's ongoing creative response to contemporary reality. This is the SECOND corollary we wish to put on record.

This phenomenon of 'accretism' points also to a THIRD corollary. No major religion could have travelled beyond its seat of origin and become '*incarnate*' *in the lives of the masses had it not sent its roots*, deep into the popular religiosity of each tribe and race.[45] In other words, historically and phenomenologically speaking, there cannot be *a metacosmic religiosity having an institutional grip on the people save* on the basis of a popular religiosity ! The converse, however, is not true For there can and in fact there do exist tribal religions independent of, though open to, Scriptural Religions

The patterns of mass-conversions offer us another valuable corollary, the FOURTH in the series As stated elsewhere,[46] bulk conversions from one soteriology to another are rare, if not impossible, except under military pressure. But a change over from a tribal religion to a metacosmic soteriology is a spontaneous process in which the former, without sacrificing its own character, provides a popular base for the latter Being cosmic religions, they are "this-worldly" in every sense of the term, and are often drawn by some "community advantages" to accept the institutional framework of a scriptural religion[47] (The latter which generally shuns change, tends, paradoxically, to use its "other-worldly" teachings to consolidate its "this-worldly" institutions !) The scheduled castes and tribes in India that have accepted Christianity or more particularly Buddhism and Islam on a mass-scale, substantiate this thesis A better illustration is provided by the missionary conflicts between Christianity and Islam After three and a half centuries of concerted proselytism, colonial Christianity in Indonesia pocketed a little over two million converts from 'Islam', and even these came mostly from Northern Sumatra, Moluccas, Ambonia and other outer islands where tribal culture prevailed; and Christian 'successes' among the tribals of the Atlantic coast of Africa, compared with the miserable

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44 Cf diagram, Ibid , p 83.
45 Ibid , p 78
46 Ibid , p. 79.
47. For some case studies, cf. C. E STIPE, art cit , pp. 124-128

failure in Muslim Africa — except a minor conquest among the mountain tribes in Kabyles[48] — point in the same direction.

Let me end with the FIFTH and final corollary The tribal and "clannic" societies, given their strong religio-cultural cohesion, are never immune to the danger of intertribal conflicts. Tribalism — often equated with divisive provincialism — can be exploited ideologically by the enemies of social change The strategy of 'divide and rule' can thwart liberation-movements, as will be discussed in the next section.

To sum up, we have described the anatomy of the religious phenomenon first in terms of the criss-crossing of racio-linguistic contours within scriptural religions, and, secondly, in terms of the five consequences issuing from the "accretion" of cosmic religions into the meta-cosmic ones. There is now another interaction which deserves attention if our picture has to be complete: the one between these religions and various socio-political ideologies. Which brings us to the core of our inquiry. RELIGION AND REVOLUTION.

II. *The Revolutionary Urge in Religions and the Role of Ideologies*

Luna Charsky, the first Soviet Minister of Culture, had this confession to make about religion "It is like a nail", he declared "The harder you hit it, the deeper it goes into the wood "[49] By persecuting religion, the Revolutionaries would hardly kill it but only make it more reactionary Conversely, when challenged by an oppressive system, Religion might unleash its potential for radical change A true revolution cannot go against religion in its totality; if a revolution succeeds, it does so normally as a cathartic renewal of religion itself. It is seven decades of Marxism that makes us say it. The Che Guevara sensed this when he said· "Only when Christians have the courage to give a whole-hearted revolutionary testimony will the Latin American Revolution become invincible."[50] With this prophecy he seems to have suggested the theme for a new chapter in the history of both the Marxist ideology and the Christian religion; a chapter that Nicaragua is struggling at death-point to write for posterity !

This is even more true of the other religions which have a more extensive hold on the Third-World than Christianity. No *true* liberation is possible unless people are 'religiously' motivated towards it. To be religiously motivated, is to be drawn from the depths of one's being.

48 Cf. G H JANSEN, *Militant Islam*, Harper & Row, New York 1979, pp. 54-56 Though tendentious, these pages are an eye-opener

49. Quoted in James H. BILLINGTON, "Christianity in USSR", *Theology Today*, XXXVI/2 (July 1980), p 207

50 Quoted in *CALA News Letter* 8/4 (March 1981), p. 1.

This motivation, we concede, could be occasioned by alien ideologies, as history often attests. But the peoples of the Third World will not spontaneously embark on a costly adventure unless their lives are touched and their depths stirred by its prospects *along the "cultural" patterns of their own "religious" histories* — which, of course, differ widely from place to place, as was demonstrated in the previous section. Take, for instance, the Chinese peasant culture which is marked by a history of revolts, in contrast with, say, the culture of the Guinean peasantry which has had no such tradition — a fact explicitly noted by Amilcar Cabral who laid great emphasis on the local cultural variant of every socialist revolution.[51] This did not imply for Cabral that Guinea was incapable of radical change but that he had to consult his own culture rather than merely copy an alien model Let us therefore linger first on the African situation which teaches many lessons to the Third World theologians.

(A) The tribal communities of Africa, if Marx is rightly interpreted, can be classed as "pre-Capitalist socialist societies" in that they can reach full-fledged socialism without passing through the crucible of Capitalism.[52] Ziegler, with World Bank statistics, tries to vindicate the Tanzanian experiment of Julius Nyerere in favour of this theory.[53] But this is no easy task as both colonial and indigenous elements have left '*ideological*' dents in these societies. I refer to the local bourgeoisie and the feudal barons (not to mention the white settlers in Rhodesia and South Africa !) who inherited power from colonial rulers so that even progressive patriots like Lumumba and Nkrumah could not radically change the basic character of the *Nationalist* liberation movements But Mozambique gives us the other alternative — if we may agree with Sergio Vieira, himself a member of the FREMLINO party and a Minister.[54] For, Portugal, unlike Britain, Belgium and France, had good reasons not to give even "flag-independence" to its colonies but to cling to a facist rule,[55] thus inviting an arms struggle Mozambique responded. The arbitrary demarcation of the future frontiers of African "nations" by the colonialists, which increased racial and tribal fragmentation, and the local exploitation of tribal loyalties (corollary 5 above) were attacked simultaneously, to bring

51 P CHABAL, art cit, pp 42-54
52 J ZIEGLER, art cit, pp 38-39
53 Ibid, p 36
54 Sergio VIEIRA, "Stages of Fundamental Changes", *World Marxist Review*, January 1981, pp 15-20
55. Ibid, p 15 For unlike Belgium, France or Britain, Portugal did not accumulate capital but wasted it on aristocratic pageantry except during the last hundred years, so that she could not have maintained the metropolis and the Portuguese settlers in the colonial territories had she given them national independence

patriotism in line with inter-tribal proletarianism, as shown in the Mozambique people's massive self-immolation for the liberation of Zimbabwe[56] This is an African response to one ideology — in repudiation of another This process is bound to be normative in the future, since Africa is, by far, the most exploited of Continents.

This is the background against which the role of scriptural religious should be assessed Of course, there are only two candidates for the conversion-race in Africa Islam and Christianity Since the rule of the game is 'First Come First Served', a tribal society that has already given its allegiance to one will not normally withdraw it in favour of the other (Corollary 4) Hence, by the turn of the century, with tribal Africa mostly shared between Islam and Christianity, we can expect one of three things, if not all of them a disastrous *confrontation*, a defensive *compromise*, or a daring *collaboration* between the two religions The first is *not* unlikely, while the last is imperative — provided one knows wherein collaboration is desired Let me comment on each alternative.

Why confrontation ? The Christianity of the Colonial Masters, which still dominates the African Church, is institutionally handicapped because of its history of hostilities with Islam in Europe and in the Missions,[57] it is humbled before Islam's credibility in the movement for African unity, it is hampered by its reluctance to disengage its ecclesiastical loyalties from the ideological grip of the countries of its provenance, and it is pastorally inhibited by its dread for people's liberation struggles Hence, unless thoroughly revolutionized, that is to say, substituted by an autonomously indigenous alternative, it is bound to turn over-defensive in the face of Islam and, God forbid that it should summon ever available external help to consolidate itself against its rival Have not Rhodesia and South Africa given a precedent ? The other alternative might be "dialogue" — the dubious type that is insidiously fostered and even financed by various ideological blocks, a dangerous compromise which blunts the liberative edge of both religions Commonsense dictates, therefore, that the climate be created for harnessing the religious zeal of both traditions into a prophetic movement in the service of God's poor, through a socio-political collaboration in a common *theopraxis of liberation* Which obviously presupposes an unbiassed acquaintance with Islam

(B) Let Christians, therefore, step back for a while and gauge Islam's gigantic stature as it stands with self-confidence at the portals

56. Ibid , p 17
57 G H. Jansen, op cit , Chapters 3 & 4.

of the Third World, where it remains the most widespread single religious force to reckon with. Christians are made to believe by the media that it is also a generator of religious fanaticism and fundamentalism. Khomeini is the obvious symbol that springs up in their mind. Why not focus, then, precisely on Iran and see where the fanatics come from and how a revolution is born ?

Scan the last hundred years of history, pleads Eqbal Ahmed, Pakistani scholar, and you will note that the Khomeini episode is the *eighth* major battle that the Muslim nation embarked on to defend its sovereignty against mercantile and military exploiters from the West ! The religious clerics were in the thick of the struggle ! Reuters's concession (1872) and the Tobacco concession to Major Talbot (1895) were the first two Western manoeuvres The third uprising was in 1905 against D'Arcy's concession to open Iran's oil resources to the West, as before, with the monarch's collaboration This revolt succeeded in bringing about a modern constitutional government in 1906 which was soon overthrown by Czarist Russia and Britain in 1911 ! The opposition gathered momentum by 1919 against Lord Curzon's Anglo-Persian Treaty which would have turned Iran virtually into a British Colony This fourth national victory lasted only for two years ! For the British manoeuvred a coup-d'état led by Reza Khan in 1921 Thus absolute monarchy was re-established with Khan as dictator, the father of the notorious ex-Shah !

Reza Khan was hailed in the Western press for ushering in "modernization and Westernization under the aegis of foreign domination", adds Ahmed The Nationalists did throw him out in 1941 but could not regain control of the administration, for the British maintained a regency while the future Shah grew up under Colonial tutelage ! The Nationalists staged a return in 1950 and, after a struggle, forced new elections (under the 1906 Constitution) and established the Mossadegh Government which eventually nationalized the oil resources of Iran

Then came Iran's nightmare: the CIA organized a coup d'état, against the Mossadegh government in 1953 and installed the Shah, the tyrant who massacred nearly 200,000 Iranians — among them poets and writers ! "Iran's wealth was looted, transferred and spent in the West" Iran's Muslim masses did not simply fight the Shah They fought the Super-Power which forced him to be its gendarme in the Persian Gulf, *sold* him 19 billion dollars worth of weapons and supported his repressions until the last murderous days of his reign [58]

58 From a manuscript version made available to me of a lecture by Dr Eqbal AHMED, given at the River Side Church in New York on 20th January, 1980

Who were the fanatics ? Who were the Liberators ? Who is to be blamed for what happens in Iran *today* ? Is this also the future of the ASEAN countries with their restless 55% Muslims and of Pakistan, which are all in the hands of the same powers that provoked the wrath of Iran ? And what of the Russian intervention — understandable in the light of capitalist aggression, but not less abominable ? Islam *is* a giant, but *not* a sleeping one.

(C) Our third sample is Hinduism — a great religion comprising many little religions, inscrutable even to the expert who can only concentrate on one little corner of the maze However, given our particular focus — "the revolutionary urge of religions" — we can still make valid observations illustrative of the principles enunciated in Section One (specially Corollaries 1, 2 and 3)

First, Hinduism can be taken as a metacosmic soteriology centred round the Sacred Texts of Revealed and Interpreted Truths (*Śruti* and *Smṛti*) It is from within this orthodox tradition that the Indian Renaissance took off as a reform movement stimulated by the challenge of Western Christianity Despite its social influences and theological adventures (including the discovery of the Gnostic Christ alluded to in Part I, Section 3) it did not cease to be elitist According to one sociological survey, the off-shoots of this movement have now withered into devotionalist sects, while some in the North and West of India have succumbed to political rightism and xenophobic chauvinism, even godmen cults seem an apolitical middle-class phenomenon, indeed a far cry from the medieval saviour cults which were "liberational"; and perhaps in reaction to the onslaught of urbanization, these new cults show a marked shift from the classical concern with liberation to a mere quest for meaningfulness as in affluent societies elsewhere [59] Besides, the most disturbing issue of caste-discrimination — a socioeconomic slavery "religiously" enforced by Brahmanic orthodoxy — is not squarely faced in these reforms.

To watch the transition from reform to revolution, one must therefore, move away from this orthodox centre of Brahmanic Hin, duism. The *Bhakti* movement, the *Dalit Sāhitya* (Writings of the Oppressed) and the Tribal revolts represent three grades in this centrifugal trend.

The *Bhakti* movement — initially a popular tendency in the fringes of Brahmanism — "is the most creative upsurge of the Indian mind" which has inspired "several social and political revolts from

59 Margaret CHATTERJEE, "The Concept of Multiple Allegiance A Hypothesis Concerning the Contemporary Indian Spectrum", *Man in India*, 56/2 (April-June 1976), pp. 123-133

Shivaji's rebellion in the seventeenth century to Mahatma Gandhi's in the twentieth".[60] A comparative study of two such movements in Maharashtra[61] helps bring out the ingredients of a *religious* revolt against caste and sexist discrimination. The first is the Mahānubhāva Movement inaugurated by Chakradhar (1194-1276) who, in his ruthless denunciation of Brahmin orthodoxy, did not spare even the Vedic Scriptures. The brotherhood it fostered offered equality of status to both the *śūdras* and women. Chakradhar, of course, was killed for it Yet, the movement (revived even recently) could not muster popular enthusiasm because it was conservatively *monastic* and relatively removed from the grass-root struggles. Its message too suffered in that the mode of transmission was limited to the written word, a medium totally inaccessible to the illiterate masses. Contrast this with the *Warkari* movement which spread wider, grew deeper and survived persecution by continuing under-ground. For it was a *lay* initiative with a popular base and truly a movement of the oppressed. the untouchable castes. It produced a number of revolutionary poet-saints, many of whom were martyred, indeed the counterpart of the Hebrew prophets ! In India's religious ethos, a reformer is not likely to enthuse the masses unless he is a poet and a saint ! The other secret of success, as clearly exemplified in the Warkari movement, is the use of the *oral medium* for transmitting the message, since it necessitates a *personal* encounter between the mutually inspiring agents of social change. the suffering masses and the poet-saint A vast production of oral literature and the extensive use of song and dance ensured an on-going programme of "conscientization" It was, therefore, never petrified into a written text but ever remained fluid and flowing with the flux of time Even the sacred lore of the ancients, whenever cited or insinuated in their freedom songs, went through a creative popular hermeneusis ! And in their later encounters with Islam and Christianity too, they displayed a spirit of humane ecumenicity.

On the other hand the *Dalit Sāhitya* — "the Writings of the Poor" — circulating for two decades now, make an ideological departure from the afore-mentioned '*bhakti*' movement of which it still is a historical continuation.[62] A greater openness to other revolutionary ideologies has given teeth to this *bhakti* movement which, up to then, remained a mere conscience raising exercise within popular religiosity. Marx,

60 Balachandra NEMADE, "The Revolt of the Underprivileged", *Journal of Asian and African Studies* XV, 1-2 (1980), p 113

61. Ibid , pp 113-123

62 Jayashree B GOKHALE-TURNER, "*Bhakti* or *Vidroha*: Continuity and Change in *Dalit Sahitya*", *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, XV, 1-2 (1980), pp 29-42

Lenin, Mao, Che, Ho Chi Minh and Martin Luther King figure prominently in these writings since the Dalits see themselves associated with the liberation struggles of all the world's oppressed. From openness to all that is liberatory in other religions, there has grown a new openness to other secular ideologies. Hence the Bhakti movement has lent itself to be used ideologically to destroy the oppressive religious system in which it still has its roots ![63]

And now, as we come to Tribal India, we have not merely moved to the fringe of Brahmanic religiosity, but to *another* religious system *outside* it The student of Indology is not often introduced to this reality. It is, no doubt, the pre-capitalist socialism that we meet again, in contrast with the feudalism of monastic religions like Buddhism and of theocratic religions like Brahmanism Yet, as in Africa, so even more in India, feudalistic tendencies are gradually seeping into tribal societies[64] It is said that, though the tribal and the schedule caste woman often enjoys equality with the male because of her relative economic independence, it is the adoption of "Hindu" values that tends to diminish the status of the Harijan woman[65] The tribal society — wherever it is found — is egalitarian, free of caste or class, based as it is on a *religious socialism*, and uninhibited by puritanical *mores* characteristic of scriptural religions, but prone to counter-violence if defence of the community requires it No wonder, as Gail Omvedt documents, the tribals as a whole can boast of a history of nationalist and class struggles all over Asia, including India, not to speak of the bandit-tradition of 'Robinhoods' robbing wealthy landlords with the poor Indian villagers as applauding spectators[66]

(D) Let me terminate this survey with an extensive note on Buddhism, for it is a pan-Asian religion occupying in Asia a position analogous to that of Islam in the Third World

It is common knowledge that the Buddhist Scriptures demands radical social change but lend no support to bloody arms-struggles, even though naive theories about "righteous killing" have been advanced in the course of Buddhist history[67] But Tradition makes up for

63 Ibid , pp 37-39

64 For a case study on feudalization of tribal societies, cf Jaganath PATHY, "Political Economy of Kandha Land", *Man In India*, 56/1 (January-March 1976), pp 1-36

65 K D GANORADE, "Social Mobility in India A Study of Depressed Classes", *Man In India*, 55/3 (July-September 1975), pp 258 and 278 n 19

66 Gail OMVEDT, "Adivasis and Modes of Production in India", *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, XII/1 (January-March 1980), pp 15-22 See also Gautama BHADRA, "The Kuki (?) Uprising (1917-1919): Its Causes and Nature", *Man In India*, 55/1 (January-March 1975), pp. 10-58.

67. Cf. Paul DEMIÉVILLE, "Le bouddhisme et la guerre", *Mélange*, Tome 1, 1957 (Paris), pp. 375-384.

Scripture, and it does so extravagantly! Here even orthodox Buddhism has to its credit a theory and praxis of rebellion. Some scholars warn that it is only when Buddhism as a religion is challenged in the midst of political chaos that monks come to the forefront with lay support — as happens in Thailand[68]. But what about Burma's Buddhist resurgence, which was Messianically political? Initially aimed at Burmese Kings, it was later directed towards their British successors There must have been about twenty revolts from 1838 to 1928 — all inspired by the Maitreya cult the eschatological expectation of a just social order to be ushered in with the appearance of the future Buddha It is a belief that has scriptural foundation Note also that it was this wave of Buddhist rebellions that brought to the surface the later Independence Movement with which U Nu, a philo-Marxist initially, tried his abortive experiment with "Buddhist Socialism"[69] Sri Lanka and Indo-China have followed similar patterns Vietnam's history of the Li dynasty and the concept of "Emperor-Monk" reflects a militantly political Buddhism which is not less virulent today

Not surprisingly, the revolutionary praxis in the fringes of the Buddhist institution displays greater radicalism China offers us a series of persuasive examples[70] of which I make here a random selection From about 402 A D there were about ten armed rebellions organized by monks, climaxing in 515 A D with that of Fa-K'ing, a revolutionary monk who, like many of his kind, married a nun These monastic rebellions were directed against both the State and the official religious Establishment Since then there have been many Messianic sects which had a popular base clearly indicating the influence of cosmic religiosity over the metacosmic One such was the *Maitreya Sect* founded in 610 A D by a Buddhist monk who declared himself Emperor This sect had incorporated into its belief-system the cult of Buddha Amitābha and the desire for rebirth in his heaven known as the Western Paradise The adherents of this sect maintained that this Paradise should be created on earth, here and now, rather than in a remote future They wished to bring about a *Buddha Land*, a state of peace and equity in this existence This sect has left its traces in the whole period from the 7th to the 16th century

68 Charles F KEYES, "Political Crisis and Militant Buddhism in Contemporary Thailand", in Bardwel SMITH (ed), *Religion and Legitimation of Power in Thailand, Laos and Burma*, Anima Book , Chambersbury, PA, USA, 1978, p 160

69 For an excellent treatment of this history cf E SARKISYANZ, *The Buddhist Backgrounds of the Burmese Revolutions*, Nijhoff, The Hague, 1965

70. Cf. P. DEMIÉVILLE, art. cit , pp 357-368 Also Daniel L OVERMYER, "Folk-Buddhist Religion: Creation and Eschatologyi n Medieval China", *History of Religions*, 12/1 (August 1972), pp. 42-70.

The *White Cloud Sect* (between 1108 and 1300) and the *Lo Sect (1505 to 1956) were two others of the same kind. The most significant, perhaps, is the White Lotus Sect* (Pai-Lien Ts'ai, *1133-1813*), a branch of which continued under the name "I-Kuam-Tao" even up to 1956 and was hunted out by the Maoist regime of our times. The founder was a Buddhist monk called Mao-tzu-Yuan (1086-1166) who was assisted by women and married monks — something that provoked the wrath of the orthodox *samgha*. But these Movements continued to enjoy a certain amount of popular support Mao-tzu-Yuan was exiled and the Movement proscribed several times till it was once more recognised by Emperor Jen T'sing (1312-1321). Among its many revolutions, the most successful was that of 1351 under the leadership of Han-Shan-T'ung who also called himself Buddha Maitreya This revolution succeeded in destroying the Mongol rule and established a new dynasty· namely, the Ming Dynasty. Its first Emperor was Chu-Yuang-Chang, ex-Buddhist Novice and a former officer of the White Lotus army Of course, the irony was that he later turned anti-Buddhist. This movement was crushed again in 1813. The ban was removed in 1911 and a branch of it, as mentioned earlier, was active as late as 1956

Now, by Marxist standards these were not real revolutions, they could at best be classed as rebellions But they show how Buddhists could respond to the revolutionary moods and creeds of the time In these instances, the Buddhist messianic interpretation of the scripture and the scriptural justification of 'revolution' had come as a response to a contemporary ideology springing from the Taoist Secret Societies that awaited the True Ruler who was to give great peace to those awaiting him, and the Confucianist expectation of the Enlightened Emperor What I wish to underscore here is that the Buddhists living in a particular historical situation may, under the influence of non-Buddhist ideologies and movements, re-interpret their scriptural sources in order to respond creatively to a contemporary need — even if it means a costly revolution This story continues to this day in Chinese Buddhism !

III. *Religion and Revolution in a Third World Theology*

In scanning the wide expanse of non-Christian cultures in the Third World, we spotted our search-beam only on four areas African religiosity (which resembles that of Oceania), West Asian Islam, South Asian Hinduism, and East Asian Buddhism. Though by no means exhaustive, these four samples are illustrative of some of the major features of Religiousness in the Third World and warrant the following three conclusions.

(A) Outside the pale of semitic monotheism, there is perhaps only one stream of religiosity (and that is one form of Hinduism) which regards the One Ultimate Reality as a personal being who summons the cosmos into existence and into a personal redeeming encounter with Himself/Herself. A God who is one personal absolute Creator-Redeemer of the world and humankind is not universally affirmed as it is not universally denied. The religiousness — especially in Asia — is for a greater part Meta-theistic or, at least, non-theistic if not, at times, explicitly atheistic The common thrust, however, remains *soteriological*, the concern of most religions being *liberation* (*vimukti*, *moksa*, *nirvāna*) rather than speculation about a hypothetical liberator Many metacosmic religions point to a Future that is attainable as the present moment of total human emancipation, positing the accent on a meta-personal Beyond, if not on an 'impersonal' but transphenomenal "It" *Tao*, *Dharma*, *Tathatā*, *Brahman*, *Nirvāna*, etc. The cosmic religions, on the other had, look up to many gods and spiritual forces which constitute the spectrum of a complex unity of Being enveloping the whole of human and cosmic existence Even where the two forms of religion — the cosmic and meta-cosmic merge, the net result is not a simple equivalent of Biblical monotheism

Hence, theology as God-talk or God's talk is not necessarily the universally valid starting point or the direct object, or the only basis of an inter-religious collaboration in the Third World *Liberation, however, is* Soteriology is the foundation of theology Regrettably, the contemporary theologies of religion (with Christ pitched *against* religions or niched *within* them) are devoid of any Third World perspective because they take off from textual accounts of non-Christian religiosity and ignore the historical fact that a religion's micro-ethical concern for self-purification of individuals ("cultural revolution") is often projected on to the macro-ethical level of socio-political catharsis ("structural revolution"), this being the case even with those religions that are academically dismissed as 'world-denying' or 'escapist' (cf II above) Equally glossed over are the many explosive liberation-myths which, in their symbolic enactments such as dance and drama, song and ritual, parable and poetry, store the seeds of revolution in the hearts of people Should not, then, a Third World theology of religion necessarily have a unitary perception of religion and revolution ?

We submit that the religious instinct be defined as a revolutionary urge, a psycho-social impulse to generate a new humanity It is none other than the piercing thrust of Evolution in its self-conscious state, the human version of Nature's thirst for higher forms of life. The religious quest, in other words, is an irresistible drive to *humanize* what

has merely been *hominized* As in the biosphere where it can end up in blind alleys, so also in the *noosphere*, this Evolutionary upsurge can be arrested into regressive states of inertia Revolution could turn reactionary, religion irreligious But the foundation of a Third World theology of religion remains unshaken· namely, that it is this revolutionary impulse which constitutes and, therefore, defines the essence of *homo religiosus*

This unified view of revolution, religion and cosmic evolution imparts a Third World dimension to the understanding of "technology", and the allied concepts of "progress" and "modernization", and consequently lifts the whole debate on "inculturation" to another plane

(B) Technology is the immediate and inevitable consequence of noogenesis or hominization The human mind, as it emerges from the biosphere, demands more sensitive organs of perception (senses) and more effective means of movement (limbs) which the body does not provide physiologically For the mind is capable of extending the brain, the senses and the limbs of the body by organizing external matter into sensitized and mechanized tools of knowledge and action Technology, to be sure, is the art (*technē*) of expanding the human presence and activity into space and time cognitively and conatively in order to further humankind's psycho-social evolution Being, however, the natural accompaniment of hominization, it too can accept or escape the impact of *humanization* which issues from the revolutionary upsurge of *religiosity* Let me, therefore, recall with parenthetical explicitations, the concept of technology I proposed to the EATWOT earlier[71]

> Technology is a [humanly] induced cosmic process which is a conscious [i e, self-reflective] continuation of the [infra-human] biological evolution and which like the latter (i e, like the biological evolution) becomes humanized [i e, liberative] only by its metacosmic orientation [i e, by the revolutionary thrust of religion towards the ever nobler levels of human existence]

If, then, the law of Evolution has prescribed in the book of nature the revolutionary imperative to humanize technology through religion, a dehumanized technocracy is indeed a reversal of the evolutionary trajectory, a cosmological disaster, an irreligious un-development — though boorishly advertised in our countries as "international culture", modernization and progress, if not also as pre-evangelization ! (Part I, Section II) What de-humanizes technology is the sin of acquisitiveness organized into a socio-economic order of human relationships, a distorted cosmology which invariably fosters what Marx calls "the

71 A Pieris, art cit in n 2 above, p 87.

antagonism between man and nature". In that system, technology alienates its inseparable human partner of whom it was meant to be the cosmic extension; it desecrates the *cosmic religiosity* of the peasant masses with the transfer of biospheric pollution from industrialized countries to the Third World, and with its acquired (not inbuilt) propensity to squander nature for producing the weapons of cosmic holocaust,[72] it deflects the meta-cosmic orientation of Nature and Culture with a secularism that eclipses the Beyond from the Now, and consequently engenders in the human heart a pathological obsession with cosmic needs — or "consumerism" as it is known in the cultures that first produced it Then 'modernization' and 'progress' *must* imply the overthrow of this regressive but all pervasive system in favour of a new order of human relationships,[73] wherein technology is not so much in "control" of nature as in "harmony" with its innate thirst for humanization, that is to say, with the revolutionary dictates of religion itself

Sexism, a sensitive issue in most religions, cannot be divorced from our discourse on technology and civilisation, for there is an intimate correspondence between the *anthropo-cosmic harmony* advocated here and the *androgynic mutuality* which it presumes If nature is an exclusively feminine symbol, and if the Metacosmic Beyond, which is the redemptive consummation of the cosmic processes, is made to wear a masculine mask, then, of course, the religious enterprise of humanizing nature, civilizing technology and divinizing the human amounts to a masculine absorption of the feminine Women will be the last thing to be civilized by man, says George Meredith scornfully; and also the other way about, corrects Theodore Reik [74] The task of humanizing Nature, which is both masculine and feminine, is founded on the reciprocal activity of Man and Woman civilizing each other In this, the revolutionary impulse of all religions — save that of *some* tribal societies and *one* tiny vein in Hindusim — is ruthlessly curbed. Sexism points to an uncivilized area in religion The new cosmological order, which the Third World clamours for, includes unhampered feminine participation in religion and revolution

(C) *Inculturation*, that infelicitous word coined in the West and reminiscent of the reductionist notion of religion running through theology, anthropology and Marxist ideology (cf Part I, Section II,

72 Cf K ZARADOV, "The Environmental Movement and the Communists The Political Class Approach", *World Marxist Review*, 24/3 (March 1981), pp 50-53

73 Z S CHERTINA, art cit, p 69

74 Theodore REIK, *Of Love and Lust*, Bantam Matrix Books, New York/ Toronto, 1967, p. 470

Part II, Section II) has, fortunately, come to mean, in actual usage, the Christian search for meaningfulness within the *religious* ethos of non-Christian cultures. This is what compelled us to place it in the "Christ-of-Religions" column In which case, however, the relevant question to be asked is Into which stream of non-Christian religiosity does Christianity hope to enter, the reactionary or the revolutionary ? Or again, at what level, at the micro-ethical level of liturgy and mysticism only, or *also* at the macro-ethical level of socio-political righteousness ? To allay the Liberationist's misgivings about inculturation, one more crucial question has to be raised Which brand of Christianity seeks to be inculturated, the one framed within a cosmology that is repudiated in the Third World, or the one derived from a Third World hermeneusis of the Gospel ?

A Third World hermeneusis vivifies the Christian *Kerygma* by recharging the three keywords round which it revolves, words now worn out by ideological misuse *Basileia* (the New Order), *Metanoia* (interior conversion to that order) and *Martyrion* (overt commitment to it).

True to our non-Christian religious traditions, we can neither describe nor define the New Order but boldly strive towards it *via negativa*, namely by negating the present order not only in theory and analysis, but also in the actual commitment to overthrow it ! The Future which calls in question the Present, ever remains the "Unnamable" or at least the Unmentioned Presupposition of every true revolution For, the intimate encounter with the ultimate Reality — the core of *mysticism* — almost overlaps with a profoundly transforming experience of the present unreality The Salvific Truth dawns as the unknowing of Delusion Being shines in the darkest depths of Non-being. *Brahman-Ātman* is reached by piercing through *Māyā* *Nirvāna* culminates the pilgrimage of *Samsāra* Life is the passage through Death. Grace overwhelms where Sin abounds Revolution is born of bondage *Yahweh* abides in the *Anawim* God's Saving Power erupts from the Earth's Slaving Poor

Can we touch the one without being touched by the Other ? Only the *victim* of the present order is qualified to be its *judge* and authorized to "proclaim the Imminent Future" — which is what the *Kerygma* means *Metanoia*, then, is the disturbance of heart and change of life that such mysticism evokes It is a religiously motivated desire and decision to move towards the New Humanity a "Cultural Revolution" in the vocabulary of those who are allergic to the words 'religious conversion'. *Martyrion* is the concomitant growth of a collective testimony in the communities of converts, who are a personalized anticipation and a visible guarantee of the New Order.

Like the Supreme *Martyr*, Jesus, they too are the *victim-judge* of the existing system, and the paradigm of the Future they announce This incipient "Structural Revolution" is known as the Church — which is Good News to the Poor, because the poor by birth and the poor by option constitute it.

Such basic communities are now mushrooming all over the Third World They are not subservient to the "international culture" of the ministerial Church but are shaped by local religiosity of the poor Genuine inculturation, as argued out elsewhere,[75] is the fruit of this ecclesiological revolution, never its seed.

Hence the embarassing question Is not the Third World theologian exposed to the same temptation which the Western and Westernized anthropologists have succumbed to in their studies on "primitive" cultures ? These anthropologists are accused of "apocalyptic" megalomania in that they claim to possess a "secret power" of knowing these cultures "empathetically" by means of "participatory observation", and to have the authority to interpret them to the ignorant West [76] The Inculturationist's enthusiasm for a culture from which he is estranged and the liberationist's defence of the poor against those whose culture he happily shares, point to a dangerous trend in Third World theology Should not theology be the explicitation of the theopraxis of these *ecclesiolae* which have appropriated the revolutionary religiosity of the Third World ? And should not the writing of this theology be relegated to later redactors ? Did not all the Sacred Scriptures originate in this manner ? Is this not the Third World's way of doing theology ?

75 Cf A Pieris, art supra cit in n 35
76 Cf. E T Jacob-Pandian, art supra cit in n 36.

Note

Mark, A Subversive Reading

Born in Lisbon in 1933 of a middle-class family which was staunchly Catholic and politically rightist, Fernando Belo was ordained a priest in 1961 While he ministered to a parish in the vicinity of Lisbon during three or four years he came into contact with workmen who were non-Catholic and definitely anticlerical This contact made him look at the Church as an ideological apparatus in the service of bourgeois classes and led him to break publicly and politically with the clerical system In 1956 he had graduated as a civil engineer, later he undertook graduate studies at Louvain and Paris where he came into contact with Touraine, Barthes, Genette, Greimas and Kristeva In 1974 he published his first book, *Lecture matérialiste de l'évangile de Marc*, of which a second, revised, edition appeared the following year The work was soon translated into Portuguese (1974) and into Italian (1975) The English translation appeared only last year [1]

Belo begins by stating that "this text is the fruit of both passion and naiveté" (p 1) His passion originated from the circumstances in which he worked "a body to body struggle with the text of the bourgeois-Christian ideology that for a number of years marked out the limits of my field of speech, and a text to text struggle with my body that was thus imprisoned" (p 1) He considers himself naive in believing that without academical training he would "attempt to cross concepts from highly differentiated epistemological fields· exegesis of the Old and New Testaments, history, semiotics, historical materialism and philosophy" (p 1). What was at stake in his efforts was "to make possible a confrontation between a political practice that aims to be revolutionary, and a Christian practice that no longer aims at being religious" (p 1)

"A reading of Mark which forms the textual core of the book is the focal point of a threefold problematic (1) of biblical exegesis and biblical history, (2) of the theoretical articulation of *narrative, practice* and *ideology*, and (3) of materialist ecclesiology, which makes it possible to change the terms in the initial question of the relations between revolutionary political practice and Christian practice In each of these problematics, my aim, I might say, is always to read Mark with the help of Marx K/X " (p 6) The work consists of four parts I The Concept of "Mode of Production" (An Essay in Formal Theory), II The Mode of Production in Biblical Palestine, III Reading of Mark, IV An Easay in Materialist Ecclesiology

1 *A Materialist Reading of the Gospel of Mark* By Fernando Belo. Translated from the French by Matthew J. O'Connell Maryknoll, N.Y , Orbis Books, 1981 Pp xiv-363 $ 12 95

The author is aware that his book offers no easy reading because of the use he constantly makes of technical jargon common in philosophical, political and economic sciences A difficulty arises from common words which may occur with various meanings in various contexts The very title of the book may leave one perplexed The Italian and Portuguese translations (presumably approved by the author) read "A Political Reading of the Gospel of Mark" An action is materialist' when one takes as decisive (unequivocal) the economic and social situation without allowing oneself to start from ideas or ideologies which may try to justify situations of dominating and oppressing A reading is 'materialist' also if it clings to the very 'matter' of the text, this Belo tries to bring out even to the extent of keeping in his French/English translation the definite article which in Greek is used with the name, v g, the Jesus, the god, the Peter, etc A reading is 'materialist' when it clings to the very object of the text, viz, the fact narrated, independently from the literary aspect of the narrative Again, a reading or meaning is 'materialist' if it disentangles the 'practices' of the 'actants' (= actors or agents) of the narrative, by analyzing and classifying the various layers in the formation of the text In this way form-criticism and redaction-criticism can be called 'materialist' reading (p 96) These layers are classified by codes 1 *sequential* codes ACT (antial), viz, the actors and their actions, ANAL(ytical), the readings or interpretations the 'actants' make of the narrative, STR (ategic), the attitude and purpose of one actor in relation to the purpose of another, v g, Jesus and his adversaries, 2 *parametrical* or circumstantial codes· TOP(ographical), GEO(graphical), CHR(onological), MYTH(ological), SYMB(olical), SOC(ial) referring to the social conditions of Palestine at the time of Jesus, as opposed to BAS(ileic) which refers to the Kingdom (*basileia*), a field introduced into the text by "the followers" Finally, a reading is 'materialist' if it unfolds itself in the sphere of historical materialism Regarding "materialist ecclesiological discourse" Belo notes "the adjective 'materialist' is to be taken as meaning historical materialism, *the very fact that my text began with an exposition of historical materialism showed that this text was to be produced in the epistemological field opened by Marx*" (p 241, emphasis added).

Belo begins by exposing a theory of the economic structure of society and the "superstructural articulation of the Instances", especially political and ideological The economic structure is basic and must explain all other elements, including religion (classified as ideology) The main element in the theory is the analysis of narrative, its function in the mode of production, and its relation to ideology. A particular narrative, viz, the "Subversive Narrative" one could say, at the risk of oversimplifying the author's exposition, is a narrative influenced by the ideology of the writer(s) in the course of its composition In that case the narrative does no longer give the authentic facts The gospel of Mark is a subversive narrative Hence "the purpose of this book is to analyze a subversive narrative and the ideological work that has already been done within it" (p. 33)

Belo cherishes the idea of "isomorphism" This leads him to transpose the categories of the economic sphere into the political and

ideological spheres Since in his view religion belongs to the ideological category, he applies to it the economic notion of the "general equivalent". Just as in the economic sphere gold is the general equivalent because with it one can operate any commerical transaction, so in the political sphere the king is the universal equivalent, and in the ideological sphere the god or the *logos* (p 14f).

Part II applies the concepts of production (analyzed in Part I) to the situation of Palestine in the first century A D Since the aim of the book is a "political reading" of the Gospel, Belo begins by relating what is "represented" in the narrative (i e , the story told) to the social field in which it is supposed to have taken place. For the history of Israel he draws heavily on von Rad's *Theology of the Old Testament* (vol I) and on Jeremias' work, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus An Investigation into Economic and Social Conditions during the New Testament Period* He hardly refers to other works which have appeared during the last fifty years or so The essay brings no new views, but it has the merit of proceeding methodically Belo distinguishes in the Law two different systems, viz , one of pollution (Priestly legislation) with its prescriptions of clean and unclean food, etc , together with prescriptions of ritual expiation, the other of debt (Deuteronomic), of a more social character protection of the weaker section of society against injustice Purity and gift might perhaps be a better designation of the two systems The social formation of ancient Israel is seen as a "subasiatic" mode of production Is called "subasiatic" (after G Dhoquois) an economy where "the State interferes only at the level of the relations of production by appropriating in advance a good part of the over-production and also by controlling part of the exchanges, during both peace and war" (p 28) Belo presents Palestine's economy as mainly agricultural, dominated by a central system, viz , the Temple and its Treasure, with its taxes and control of commercial transactions To this, of course, must be added also the control exercized by the Roman occupation

Part III begins with an essay on methodology with regard to "A Reading of Mark": structural analysis or textual analysis of the narrative ? Belo proposes a reading which reflects both the structural and the textual orientations, but he emphasizes that his reading is textual There is a threefold operation. 1 small nuclei are grouped into *series* ("codes", see above), 2 these are grouped into *sequences*, seventy three in all, 3 an analysis is made at the level of "narrator/readers" Here the question of structuring the narrative is taken up A symptomatic reading "will bring out the ideological (or theological) function of Mark's writing" (p 95) Belo warns that in the course of his reading of Mk he will "frequently be picking a fight with the bourgeois exegesis and its idealism" which focusses the attention upon the real, the history, not the narrative, "it is exegesis under the aegis of idealist historicism" (p. 96) About the author of the Gospel we know nothing This matters little More important is the question of where and when the Gospel was written Only internal criticism of the text can provide some information. Belo follows G Minette de Tillesse in dating Mk from the years immediately following the destruction of Jerusalem, ca 71 or 72 A. D. The author was a Jew

writing for non-Jews, viz, the Christian community at Rome, emerging from the persecution of Nero, but remaining under threat of more persecution.

Belo's reading of the Gospel-text consists practically only in analysing the text with a view to finding the various "codes" occuring in the narrative, and in that manner to detect the "materialist" text of the narrative An example, taken from the comments on Mk 4, 37 (p 128) will give an idea of what the reading looks like.

> "A fierce gust of wind, etc" the sea as danger "Sleeping / they wake him" SYMB (powerlessness / power of the body) "Teacher" the current reading of the ACT (S 46, S 54, S 55g, etc) and the answering of Q 1 are taking place, since teacher = Messiah "That we are perishing" the curse of danger (cf S 6c) "He rebuked" cf S 6 for this STR term (cf S 42, S 51) "Silence! Be still!" cf S 6, the sea is thus infernal and treated like the unclean spirits (MYTH) "The wind fell, and there was a great calm" the blessing, the awakened J is powerful

The annotations to the text always stress the concrete aspect of the narrative With regard to Jesus we often read about "the power of the body for the good of bodies", cp in the quotation above the SYMBolic code "powerlessness/ power of the body", and "the awakened (Jesus) is powerful". Other concrete indications are given by the ACT(ant code) or the actors, the STR(ategic) code of Jesus and the others, the ANAL(ytic code) referring to the question put by the DD (disciples)

The "Reading of Mark" is followed by a chapter on "Rereading Mark" According to Belo a 'post-paschal discourse' has erazed the 'pre-paschal' narrative In his view the predictions of Jesus' Passion and death, together with the emphasis upon this Passion and death as fulfilment of the Scriptures, are an apologetic of Jesus' Messianic failure Belo seeks a confirmation of his position by comparing Mk with Mt and Lk, invoking the two-source theory Jesus was put to death for trying to uproot the Temple State His death was mere murder, a casual happening without any Messianic meaning Theology has tried to efface Jesus' failure, presenting his death as part of God's pre-ordained plan announced in the Scriptures Theology rapidly turned the dynamic story of what Jesus did into fantasy, considering his death as a sacrificial holocaust, making Jesus Son of God, source of salvation, etc Such presentation cannot be accepted because it does totally away with the basic presentation of Jesus' messianic practice.

> The ACT narrative thus becomes a succession of narratives that is programmed by *heaven*, in other words, a mythologized narrative The theological discourse has restored the narrative to the MYTH code in which the theological discourse itself originates, and has installed it in a kind of heavenly *timelessness* that is, according to M Eliade, characteristic of the structure of the MYTH code a sacred or primordial time The *Christology* thus developed will culminate in the idea of the *incarnation* of the Word of God in Jesus Christ, the narrative, fragmented to fit a liturgical framework, will become ensconced *in illo tempore*, to use a favourite phrase of Eliade,

> that is intended precisely to designate this "sacred time" in contrast to the time of profane chronology All this assures us that the problematic we have produced as that of Mark is indeed to be validly regarded as his It justifies us in moving on to clarify the *why* of this contradiction that ever-already exists between the MYTH code and theological discourse, on the one hand, and the messianic narrative, on the other (p. 240, his emphasis)

This clarification is given in Part IV An Easay in Materialist Ecclesiology.

In his materialist ecclesiology Belo tries to analyse the transformation of Christianity, from a church of the poor to State religion He seeks the root of the transformation of the Gospel in a theological idealism originating from the situation of the Christians in Rome after the events of 70 A D , but especially from Paul's theologizing (p 236) with its "theological fiction" of the divinity of Christ, predestination, Christology and soteriology

> Predestination, Christology, and soteriology here we have the threefold structure of the theological discourse in Mark (and) the other New Testament writings, especially in the letters of Paul in which the act of death/resurrection, which is connected with heaven by predestinative knowledge, is proposed as *exemplary* and *salutary* for all Christians, with Christ becoming their *general equivalent* (p 279, his emphasis)

In the materialist reading of Mk Jesus does not appear as a nationalist political revolutionary after the manner of the Zealots who wanted to get rid of the Romans and their collaborators, without changing the religious institutions Rather, Jesus wanted to change radically the religious institutions which dominated the poor

In his reading of Mk Belo repeatedly emphasizes the actions of Christ as a characteristic of the materialist narrative This practice must be the characteristic of the materialist church the practice of the hands, or charity, the practice of the feet, or hope, the practice of the eyes, or faith "The *ekklesia* is simply the community as a gathering but also designates the *practice* specific to this community, a practice that is articulated at the three levels — economic, political, and ideological — in the form of charity, hope and faith" (p 267, his emphasis) Christian identity, therefore, is not to be sought in a faith formulation but in practice "The Gospel will make us hear the promise of blessing, the promise of a radically communist social formation that stakes everything on use value, on the corporality of the agents, on the textual materiality of the signifiers of the various processes of writing — a practice that is international or 'catholic' in scope, and undergoing constant conversion, a practice that is the pledge of a revolution that goes on indefinitely" (p 267)

One must respect the courage and conviction with which the author has engaged into so many academic fields, endeavouring to elaborate a philosophical and exegetical system. One may wonder, however, whether the book could not have been presented in a simpler and more direct way. Much of what Belo says about the socio-eco-

nomic situation of Israel at the time of Christ is true, though we should not overlook that, as a matter of fact, we have very little documentation about the economic situation of Israel. Belo builds up conclusions from his own epistemology. Again, much of what he says about Jesus' "strategy" and the Church of the first generations is true, though at times a bit simplistic and exaggerated as, v g , his speculations about the Son of Man, his dialectic oppositions or interpretations of events easily forced (v g , seeing in Jesus' words "Render unto Caesar" a condemnation of the social system and the Roman occupation) Belo's view of sin as 'debt' is correct but incomplete (as regards both Old and New Testament, including Mk) There is not much new in his interpretation of the Eucharist as a sharing of bread, but this view again is incomplete. Mk sees the Eucharist clearly as sacrifice as well It is difficult to follow Belo's speculations about the absent Christ and Christ's purpose "to go to the pagans" (p 211) which are, to say the least, strange Similarly his own translation of "this is my blood . poured out *upon many*" (*huper pollōn*) looks rather arbitrary in its context, especially if one takes into account Mk 9, 40, the only other instance in Mk where the preposition *huper* with the genitive is found, which Belo translates spontaneously "he who is not against us is *for us*" For Belo the eucharistic words are "an anticipation of the death and a theological metaphorization of it, and therefore post-paschal" (p 211) *One is puzzled by the next lines " 'In truth, I tell you'* narrative/readers level 'I shall never drink kingdom of God' J is here depicted as a participant in the ecclesial narratives (therefore a prepaschal text)" (p 211) Why are the previous lines in the same conversational context differently classified ?

Belo is right in condemning idealist and abstract exegesis of the Gospel, but he is not quite fair in generalizing as if all academic exegesis were idealist and abstract, failing to take into account the social conditions in which the Gospel was written The studies of von Rad and Jeremias which he is using for his chapter on the socio-economic situation in Palestine are evidence that academic exegesis also takes into account the situation in Palestine The works of von Rad and Jeremias are by no means the only ones doing so

The main point to be criticized in the book is the author's notion of Gospel which he derives from extending to the composition of the gospel his own views on economic production He rejects our Gospel because as it stands it does not conform to his categories He practically excludes from Jesus' mission all teaching, reducing his ministry to practice, practice of "the body for the good of bodies" He seems to be unwilling to admit in the Gospel anything more than a narrative of Jesus' goings and comings, his practice, which he labels as "messianic practice". To take the Gospel as the expression of the Church's understanding of Jesus' mission in the light of the resurrection would be to accept "post-paschal additions" The search for the meaning of the person and mission of Jesus appears in our earliest documents, especially Paul's letters referring to the Tradition (cf 1 Cor 11, 23; 15, 3ff), long before 70 A D , date which Belo accepts for Mk The apostolic Tradition is from the beginning post-paschal, theologizing,

implicitly signifying that the material practice of Jesus is not the full truth about Jesus and his mission

According to Belo "the resurrection of Jesus is affirmed as following upon his murder Would there be any point whatever in affirming the resurrection of a Jesus who had grown old and who had happily died the 'good death' of which certain type of piety speaks ? The resurrection becomes a question not on the basis of his death but only of his murder, which is a consequence of the powerful, liberating subversiveness of a practice that breaks with the SOC When the theological discourse changes the murder of J into a simple death, it *reduces this site* of the question *The resurrection can only be the fruit of insurrection*" (p 295, his emphasis) There is no need to point out that this fallacy and sophistry about the death of Jesus ignores the Christian Tradition of the N T More could be said about the author's views on the resurrection and the "absence of Jesus" so often mentioned All this can no longer be called a Christian attitude

Finally, our Gospels are "Gospels" in the mould and structure in which they have come to us, containing both "practice" and "theology" as Gospel Exegesis, evidently, may seek to discover, as much as is possible, the various phases of their composition — a delicate task — but to cut out parts as "subversive narrative", because they do not fit into a given epistemology, can leave us only with a mutilated Gospel As to the interpretation of the Gospel message, it remains for the reader, not for the exegete, to see what the text contains for him individually in his own environment, this, however, must be done without disfiguring God's word which the apostolic Church has recognized in the Gospels To see God's word in the Gospel, faith is required Our criterion will be a living dialectic, combining diversity in individual reading with communion in a unique faith transmitted in the living Tradition of the Church, *quod semper, quod ubique*

J VOLCKAERT, S J

Book Reviews

Fundamental Theology

Faith in History and Society By Johann Baptist METZ *London, Burns and Oates*, 1980 Pp x-237 £ 6 50

This book, subtitled "Towards a Practical Fundamental Theology", has been acclaimed as the most important statement to date of the meaning of political theology, and as "a fundamental theology in which the spiritual and social challenge of our time is taken up and transformed in a new praxis of Christianity and theology" (K Rahner) It is, however, heavily contextualised in mid-European philosophy and theology and many of us in India will find it difficult to follow the line of thought of the author and to profit from his insights The abstract language which makes few concessions to the imagination is not made more accessible by a very literal and mediocre translation The main thrust of the book is that Christian praxis is at the heart of theology "It is only when they imitate Christ that Christians know who it *is* to whom they have given their consent and who saves them" (p 52), says the author The theme is developed in three sections, "Concept", "Themes" and "Categories" I found the last section somewhat easier to follow, with its main ideas of Christianity as *memory*, *narrative* and *solidarity* Metz offers a fresh look on dogma as the articulation of "dangerous memory" that can criticise the present precisely because it is the bearer of a memory of promises to be realised Thus Christianity as a community of those who believe in Jesus Christ has, from the very beginning, not been primarily a community interpreting and arguing, but a community remembering and narrating with a practical intention — a narrative and evocative memory of the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus" (p 212) Most chapters had been written for other occasions but have been somewhat adapted to the overall plan of the book There is an excessive number of printing errors Philosophical minds abreast of modern thought will find here insights to renew their approach to theology

G GISPERT-SAUCH, S J

Rahneriana

Schriften zur Theologie Band XIII Gott und Offenbarung By Karl RAHNER *Zurich, Benziger Verlag*, 1978 Pp 455 DM 56

Karl Rahner's impressive series of *Schriften* confirms him to be truly the householder of the Gospel who brings out from his storeroom things both new and old (Mt 13 52) The contributions to this thirteenth volume concern a wide range of burning issues in contemporary theology Yet, however wide the range of the issues dealt with may be, Rahner again and again leads the reader back to the few central themes of his theological thought, as, for instance, a transcendental anthropology where man is seen as the created personal subject marked by infinite receptivity to God who communicates himself to him in grace, the unity and coextension of the history of salvation and revelation, a Christology "from below" meeting the more familiar statements of the Christology "from above", the Church as the representative presence of Christ's eschatologically victorious salvation and thus as the "original sacrament" (*Ursakrament*), the love of neighbour as the primary act of love of God, Christian morality in the light of a formal existential ethics, and so on

In the present volume, too, Rahner traces back particular new questions to his basic insights Thus the reader meets in the various essays with whole passages familiar to him from earlier writings of the author Not rarely, however, the formulations have been polished and refined so as to produce texts of great theological and spiritual density Here and there the reader meets, as it were, with precious jewels producing ever new reflections when looked at from different angles I am thinking, especially, of the following essays "The Question of the Meaning of Human Existence when Faced with God, the Absolute Mystery", "Dialogue with God?", "What Does it Mean Today to Believe in Jesus Christ?", "Faith as Courage", "Experience of the Holy Spirit"

In "Mary and the Christian Image of Woman" Rahner postulates the need for a "Mariology from below" which would set out from the insights of contemporary exegesis In such a Mariology "Mary must also appear as the woman from among the poor people, as the person who learns living in the context of the historical, social and religious situation of her time and milieu She must not be seen as a heavenly, but rather as a human being who acted and learned from within common situations and thus gradually grew into the active acceptance of the salvific function of her life for herself and the others, in faith, hope and love Mary is model and mother of the believers precisely in this way" (p 358)

A substantial, hitherto unpublished, study of about fifty pages inquires in a fresh way into the existence of angels Rahner avoids the alternative of either simply re-stating the traditional teaching of created (definitely) good and (definitely) evil personal spiritual beings besides and above man or of flatly and unambiguously denying the existence of the devil and of demons He opts instead for a certain neutrality between these positions and waits for a clarification of the problem in the future history of faith and theology, that is, in the faith-consciousness of the Church However, such waiting, Rahner insists, must not be a pretext for theological cowardice or laziness In his customary daring and yet circumspect way he shows conclusively that with a contemporary theology of the cosmos as a world in *becoming*, the essence and existence of "angels" are conceivable From there he inquires into possible indications in our world of experience of units and hierarchies (*Ordnungen*) in the realm of nature and of universal human history Such experiences would eventually find an explanation in a radically re-formulated, yet biblically grounded, teaching of "angelic" Principalities and Powers

A number of contributions take up and further refine Rahner's well-known positions on the experience of the Spirit and the work of Christ's grace in and, with due qualifications, through the non-Christian religions and ideologies Rahner is fully alive to the intrinsic limitations of the traditional theological approach in these matters He encourages the historian of religion, provided he combines with his empirical method an interest in theology, to try to discover in the mysticisms of the great world religions a genuine supernatural mysticism, even if such non-Christian mysticism does not present itself necessarily as religious. "In short", he writes, "the systematic theologian could [.] offer the empirically working historian of religion points of view and patterns which would help him to discover in all the richness and at the same time partly abhorrent depravities of the non-Christian religions that God's grace for the salvation of man is always and everywhere at work, that it manifests itself — however obscurely and imperfectly — in the non-Christian religions and makes them into ways of salvation on which men encounter God and his Christ" (pp 349f) In this spirit his essay on the experience of transcendence in mysticism wishes to contribute to the making of a comparative mystical theology He states there four theses concerning a comparative inquiry into aspects of experiences of transcendence the interpretation of which is controversial between East and West In the context of Christian-Muslim dialogue Rahner sets out to show that a properly stated teaching on the Trinity would appear to radicalize monotheism rather than militate against it

Yet, perhaps the most prominent feature of this volume of the *Schriften* is its first four studies dealing with the problem of theological hermeneutics Here Rahner confronts one of the crucial issues at stake in the at times dramatic controversies among leading theologians in the Church of the 1970's, namely, the question of the historicity of dogma and moral teaching in a world of rapid change not only in the area of human knowledge but also in the dimension of faith He endeavours to develop methodological and hermeneutical principles out of a historico-critical exegesis of dogmas and authoritative doctrinal statements and moral teachings of the past The history of dogma is, on the one hand, "one-tracked" and irreversible, i e , a defined dogmatic proposition cannot be declared later as simply erroneous And yet, this does not preclude the fact that genuine dogmas, in their tradition and formulation, are amalgamated with ideas and patterns of thought that do not belong to the binding content of the dogmatic statement in question In a given historical period the amalgamated elements were not known as such — and could not be — by theology and the magisterium The subsequent process of separating the time-bound elements from the lasting ones must make it clear that the true identity of the dogma is preserved

These esssys provide many helpful reflections on the proper relationship between magisterium and theology Here shines forth Rahner's outstanding quality as a Catholic theologian, the combining of theological depth and prophetic boldness with fidelity to the great tradition and to authentic ecclesiastical teaching in past and present Educated Christians, eager to pay respect to both modern theology and the magisterium at a time of recurring, and to some extent unavoidable, conflicts will find much light and encouragement in these pages

Christian W TROLL, S J

Theological Investigations. Volume XVII Jesus, Man and the Church By Karl RAHNER *London, Darton, Longman and Todd*, 1981 Pp 260 £ 14 50

This volume XVII of *Theological Investigations* corresponds to the second half of volume XII of the German *Schriften*, previously reviewed in VIDYAJYOTI (1977, pp 339-340) That entire volume, Rahner claimed, though made up of apparently disparate pieces, could be said to have as unifying theme the experience of the Spirit, basis of theology The theme was perhaps more clearly evident in the volume's first half, that is in *Theological Investigations* XVI (cf VIDYAJYOTI 1980, pp 87-88), it nevertheless recurs here and some essays are again inspired by the *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius

The volume consists of four parts "The Experience of Jesus Christ", "Man in the Spirit", "The Ministry and the Spirit", "Signs of the Times for the Church" Needless to say, many areas of current theological interest are represented here to which Rahner himself has over the years repeatedly returned, always with new insights and from a new angle An example of this is found in the Christological essays Rahner has often written on non-Christian religions in relation to Jesus Christ He returns to the theme from the point of view of a 'seeking Christology', akin to the previous approach to 'anonymous Christianity' derived from his transcendental Christology Similarly, he seeks once more to bridge the gap between functional and ontological Christology, insisting that the experience of Jesus himself is the foundation of both

The section on anthropology contains, among others, two enlightening essays on 'The Body in the Order of Salvation", and on "The Intermediate State" between death and resurrection, in the latter Rahner points out that the doctrine of the 'intermediate state' is not a dogma and leaves open the theocogical opinion of an immediate resurrection of the bodies immediately after death The essays on ecclesiology centre around two areas of concern The first is the Church *ad intra* Rahner reflects here on "Opposition in the Church" and, where doctrine is concerned comments on the recent Declaration *Mysterium Ecclesiae* of the S Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith He then passes on to problems of ecumenism, reflecting on "The One Church and the Many Churches", and asking the question "Is Church Union Dogmatically Possible ?" As would be expected from his previous writings on ecumenism, Rahner's answer is an open one the Church of the future will be a communion of the Churches, no burden being imposed on any of them beyond what is necessary for true unity This will demand further reforms and new attitudes from the Catholic Church itself

It is not possible to mention here all the essays contained in the volume What has been said suffices to show that we are once more offered a rich fare We may hope that the English edition of Rahner's *Schriften*, competently done by Darton, Longman and Todd, will continue to keep pace with the German volumes The publishers must be thanked for making available to the English readership an indispensable theological series

J DUPUIS, S J

Church

"Hierarchica Communio" By Gianfranco GHIRLANDA, S J *Roma, Università Gregoriana Editrice*, 1980 Pp xix-653 Lire 30 000

Nobody would deny that Vatican II marks an epoch in the recent history of Christianity Its impact is being felt daily, and one can surmise that it will be on the increase

Father Ghirlanda has made here an almost exhaustive study of the conciliar Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, definitely the core of all the conciliar activities Almost all the other documents published by Vatican II flow from it

It is a very detailed study, though focussed on a phrase used by Paul VI in his opening speech at the third session, "Hierarchica Communio" Without indulging in preconceived ideas, the author shows convincingly that the final text

voted on by the conciliar fathers is well summed up by the two words 'communion' and 'hierarchy'

The interest of the study lies mostly in the wealth of its documentation Under the author's guidance we can follow all the successive steps that led to the final text, above all the discussions in the council's hall and in commissions, Paul VI's interventions, the various theological approaches represented in the discussions, the tensions and criticisms, etc

Thus we learn something fundamental about the revolution' brought about by Vatican II The council had the courage to pass over from a centralist and papalist vision of the Church to an open and realistic ecclesiology, from a juridical viewpoint to a theological one, from a triumphalist vision to an evangelical one This, for instance, happened when the Council ceased to simply identify the Catholic Church with the Mystical Body of Christ – a step with enormous ecumenical consequences Also, when the sacramentality of the episcopacy was declared, taking the central place from the concept of jurisdiction and consequent legalistic views

Obviously the book is no easy reading Foot-notes abound to the extent that in some pages only one line of text remains Yet it is so rich that no professor of ecclesiology henceforth can dispense from consulting it

One might express the wish to see the author write a summary of his doctoral dissertation, for instance along the lines of Msgr J Hamer's excellent work *The Church is a Communion* in which he would present in summary form his own approach and conclusions

E R HAMBYE, S J

Ecumenism

Models in Ecumenical Dialogue *A* Study of the Methodological Development in the Commission on 'Faith and Order" of the World Council of Churches By Kuncheria PATHIL *Bangalore, Dharmaram Publications*, 1981 Pp. xxii-515 Rs 50 (limpcover), Rs 60 (hardcover)

The International Commission on Faith and Order has been since 1927 the major ecumenical body that has studied in depth the theological differences existing among Churches and the ways and means to overcome them. For the last thirty-five years much progress has been registered in 1948 the Commission was integrated into the World Council of Churches, while keeping its identity, in 1952, for the first time Catholic Observers attended the Faith and Order World Conference at Lund, finally, since the W C C Uppsala assembly in 1968, Catholic members belong to the Commission Actually it is so far the only international ecumenical body, originated from the Anglican and Protestan Churches, where Catholics enjoy full membership and equal responsibilities

Faith and Order is primarily concerned with questions bearing on the basic creeds and the ministry The idea that inspired the founders of the Commission was that, unless fundamental agreement was reached on matters of Christian belief and the ministry, all movement towards unity would be in vain They were right, though one must remember that there are also socio-psychological obstacles, often even more formidable than the theological ones

The author has focussed his study on the various methodologies used by the members of the Commission since 1927 First, they used the comparative method, then the dialectical one, finally, since 1952, the Christological method and the inter-contextual method In his ninth and last chapter (pp 397-442) Fr Pathil sums up the ecumenical experience of the last decades since 1927 I would advise every ecumenical-minded Christian to read carefully those pages They are rich with ecumenical experience and the right theological approach In concluding that chapter, the author proposes under eleven statements criteria towards evaluating and developing ecumenical methods These are, so to speak, the gist of his findings, they are worth reading and pondering.

Ecumenism is much spoken of, but is it really practiced ? The work of Dr Kuncheria Pathil, who owes much of his training to the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium, should be a great incentive for such a practice

E R HAMBYE, S J

The Unknown Christ Revisited

The Unknown Christ of Hinduism. Towards an Ecumenical Christophany Revised and Enlarged Edition By Raimundo PANIKKAR *London, Darton, Longman and Todd*, 1981 Pp xii-195 £ 5 95

Almost 20 years have elapsed since R Panikkar's *The Unknown Christ of*

Hinduism was first published in 1964 (cf THE CLERGY MONTHLY SUPPLEMENT 1965, pp 278-283) It was a seminal book and its title has become the symbol of a theological school which has outgrown the 'fulfilment theory' as it used to be presented in its rigid form Much under the influence of that book, many theologians today — in India, perhaps, most of them — are no longer satisfied to look upon the religious traditions of the world as merely the expression of human aspirations towards God, they view them as the embodiment of true divine revelation, oriented towards the mystery of Jesus Christ Hence the Presence of Christ" theory

Panikkar now revisits his "Unknown Christ" in the light of the evolution of his own thought since the original edition His literary production meanwhile has been enormous Special mention may be made, because of their immediate relevance to the subject, of *Salvation in Christ Concreteness and Universality — The Supername* (1972) and *The Intra-Religious Dialogue*, published in 1978 (cf VIDYAJYOTI 1979, p 537) The subtitle added here to the revised and enlarged edition, "Towards an Ecumenical Christophany", is by itself an indication of a new trend already found in the two volumes just mentioned

Panikkar writes an entirely new 30-page Introduction, in which he explains that, while the fundamental intuition of the first book remains for him valid, he yet sees it now in a new light Describing his general theme he writes "I speak neither of a principle unknown to Hinduism, nor of a dimension of the divine unknown to Christianity, but of that unknown *reality*, which Christians call Christ, discovered in the heart of Hinduism, not as a stranger to it, but as its very *principle of life* " (pp 19-20) He goes on to say that "The thesis of this book is a mystical one" "The Christ of whom (it) speaks is the living and loving reality of the truly believing Christian in whatever form the person may formulate or conceptualize this reality" (p 22) What, however, does Christ represent? Panikkar explains that for him Christ is the most powerful living symbol, not confined to the historical Jesus, of the totality of reality, human, divine and cosmic, which he calls the Mystery (pp 23, 26-27) This symbol may have other names, for instance Rāma, Krishna, Īsvara, or Purusha (p 27) Christians have called it Christ because it is in and through Jesus that they have come to believe in the decisive reality; yet each name expresses the undivided Mystery (p 29), each is an unknown dimension of Christ (p 30)

I have quoted at length from the Introduction which is the newest element in the revised edition More important than to describe again the content of the book (which is well known) was to follow the author's own reappraisal It would be worthwhile to follow this up through the new text, but there is no room for this here I may, however, formulate a question which I have raised elsewhere in other terms in connection with some other recent writings of Panikkar (cf VIDYAJYOTI 1979, p 537) How is the relationship to be conceived between the reality or Mystery, the Christ-symbol and the historical Jesus? This, it seems to me, is where Panikkar's thought has registered a consequential shift And, in spite of the author's claim, I am not persuaded that the distinction as he now makes it between the Christ of faith and the Jesus of history does full justice to the basic Christian assertion Jesus *is* the Christ

J DUPUIS, S J

Third World Theology

African Philosophy An Introduction to the main philosophical trends in Contemporary Africa By Prof E A RUCH, OMI and Dr K C ANYANWU *Rome, Catholic Book Agency*, 1981 Pp 412

Chinese and Western Religious Symbols as Used in Taiwan. By Daniel G Ross S J *Taiwan, Fu Jen University*, 1980 Pp vii-226

Confucius et Jésus Christ La premiere theologie chretienne en Corée d'après l'oeuvre de YiPiek, lettre Confuceen 1754-1786 By Jean SANGBAE RI *Paris, Éditions Beauchesne*, 1979 Pp 161

The three books — for none of which is the price mentioned — witness to efforts being made in different Third World Churches, in the line of inculturation and research, towards indigenous theologies

The study of African Philosophy is based by the two authors on the axiom that "only a Hegelian can understand Hegel and only a non-Hegelian can explain him" [1] However, the two authors contribute unequally to the work While Ruch gives a synthesis of the philosophical and cultural scene of Africa based on a wide reading of authors and

myths, and his outlook is basically Christian. Anyanwu writes four independent essays proposing an African outlook independent of all imported ideologies and religions, Christianity included The book has insightful analyses of the relation of philosophy and myths, stressing the independent value of the latter ("we do not justify the myth, it rather justifies us", p 46) The study proposes an African view of being as essentially force and dynamism, and of beauty as a matter not of proportion but of meaning The psychological insights are also valuable the African world sees itself through the experience of racism, slavery and colonialism, and the affirmation of negritude is an important element of its consciousness Perhaps the most informative section is the last, Part IV, where the political ideologies prevalent in the continent are analysed and the contributions of Senghor, Kuanda, Manganyi NKrumah and Tevordjre brought out The study may be of interest to India, especially in relation to tribal philosophy and theology Anyanwu ends his last essay with this summary "The African cultural values teach that people are communities of believers and God the head of such communities The purpose and meaning of life depend on the development of the individual through the development of the whole, the duty to work for the whole and the obligation to live for the whole A community of people does not talk of right and equality but of duty and responsibility to God, Life and the People" (p 383) A useful 25 page bibliography concludes the book

Ross's book is a report of an interesting religious sociology survey conducted in Taiwan on the value ('good-evil'), power ('strong-weak') and activity ('lively-dull') of 20 religious symbols taken in equal numbers from the Chinese and the Christian traditions The report offers a model of a religious survey that goes beyond the tabulations of creeds or religious observances The symbols include the Buddha Confucius, the Chinese Goddess of mercy, the Cross the Crucifix, the Good Shepherd Our Lady, the snake, the lotus grapes, etc The variables for five religious groups (Popular Religionists, Buddhists, Catholics, Protestants, no-religionists) are studied in detail, as well as the ethnic variants Among the interesting data collected we find a dangerously high evaluation among Catholics of Mary above the figures of Christ, a positive influence of education among Christian groups on the valuation of the symbols, but a negative one in other groups, and a more positive evaluation of non-Christian symbols by Catholics than by their Protestant fellow-believers Limited in scope, the study offers good guidelines for further research

The third book is a fascinating account of an Asian theology formulated two centuries ago by YiPiek (unfortunately spelt very differently by various authors Ni-Piek-i, Ri-Pyek-i, etc) A lay person and the founder of Korean Christianity, he came to the faith, with a number of friends, not as a result of missionary preaching but through the study and discussion of the Chinese books written by Ricci This book gives a translation of two writings of YiPiek and a careful analysis of the concrete theology contained in them — a theology which while remaining Christian owes nothing to the abstractions of scholasticism and little to the Graeco-Roman world It is essentially rooted in the Confucian tradition Christianity is presented in the context of the "right and straight path" and the search for human perfection characteristic of Confucianism Jesus is Confucius' perfect man, wise and holy, full of the virtues and of *jen* (love), but his divinity and the Trinity are not ignored The good life in the new path is a life according to Jesus, but nature as the manifestation of God remains and an important theme of YiPiek's theology The book touches on deeper and more universal problems, such as that of theological pluralism, of the validity of taking Confucius as the basis of a Christian reflection in the Far East, and of the continuity rather than rupture between the religion of China and Korea and Christianity It thus brings again on the anvil the today unpopular 'fulfilment theory' It is interesting to note that at a time when Rome was disavowing the work of Ricci and his companions, their books were the starting point of a Christian Church that has produced outstanding martyrs and writers, and flourishes today with a rapidly growing Catholic population of 1 200 000 Asia should be proud of the accomplishment of YiPiek and, in spite of the problems of linguistic communication, India can profit from his creativity

G GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

Religion and World

Towards Peace with Justice. The Role of Religion Today By Angelo FER-

NANDES *New Delhi, Indian Social Institute*, 1981 Pp 148 Rs 20

As President of the World Conference on Religion and Peace and in other capacities, Archbishop Angelo Fernandes has often addressed himself to world problems well beyond the narrow confines of domestic Christian concerns The book deals with the great problems of our times and civilization at the level of what the author calls "macro-ethics" or "macro-evangelization" The style of presidential or key-note addresses has been preserved in the book's nine chapters They deal with such global topics as disarmament, the new international economic order, ecology, health, the family, energy, world poverty, the North-South dialogue, etc , and above all with the place of religion in shaping the new world emerging from the electronic revolution As many of the addresses were originally delivered at the World Conference on Religion and Peace, the role of religion is described in dialogal and rather general terms, although always reflecting clearly a theistic perspective and a Christian perception The main thrust of the addresses is the need to make the insights of eternal wisdom contained in the world religions to bear on the actual problems of our world, especially those demanding international cooperation The book reveals to us a widely read speaker who can quote appropriately from many sources, although no footnotes or references are given People concerned with the larger issues of humanity will find here food for thought and an example for a dialogal approach to them

G GISPERT-SAUCH, S J

Tradition

The Dynamic of Tradition By A M ALLCHIN *London, Darton, Longman and Todd*, 1981 Pp vii-151 £ 4 50

Canon Allchin, now at Canterbury, was for many years warden and chaplain of Pusey House, Oxford He is well-known for his gifts as spiritual director, writer and lecturer Above all he is entirely devoted to the cause of Christian unity

His new book, made of a long introduction, six chapters and a short epilogue, could be summed up paradoxically thus History has to be overcome by history if we are serious about promoting the movement towards unity among Christians Tradition and its weight are no obstacle but, if well handled, must become a chief instrument towards reconciliation This is realistic optimism

For many years the author has made his own what Thomas Merton, whom he quotes, wrote in *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* "If I can unite *in myself* the thought and the devotion of Eastern and Western Christendom, the Greek and the Latin fathers, the Russian with the Spanish mystics, I can prepare in myself the reunion of divided Christians From that secret and unspoken unity in myself can eventually come a visible and manifest unity of all Christians" (p 61)

Writing in that perspective, Canon Allchin begins with Julian of Norwich, the anchoress and mystic of the 14th century, then passes on to T S Eliot and his Catholic vision — to mention just two names — without neglecting the great Anglican divines, especially Bishop Lancelot Andrewes (d 1626) We owe to the author a reprint (pp 41-53) of *St Erkenwald*, a delightful poem of the 14th century Such Christian poetry shows how deep poetical spirituality can be, and what unexpected convergence it shows with Eastern liturgical poems

Ecumenism in time and space, sharing various spiritual traditions, must be the mainstay of the universal will to bridge our Christian divisions It will also help towards a fruitful dialogue with Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and other religious traditions (pp 100-107)

Let me conclude the review of this nourishing and inspiring book by quoting the author on the ecumenical significance of the cross "All things were altered by Christ's passion, past and future, East and West Time and space are no longer barriers which separate us from one another, but ways of communion, paths by which we may come to meet one another in the life which flows from the side of Christ" (p 121)

E R HAMBYE, S J

Spirituality

The Letters of St Teresa of Jesus. Translated by E Allison PEERS *London, Sheed and Ward*, 1980 Vol I, pp xiii-509, vol II, pp xii-511-1004 £ 15.

Professor Allison Peers, who died in the early 50's, was for well over forty years the great specialist in the Spanish mysticism, particularly the Carmelite tradition

His admirable translation of the *Complete Works of St Teresa of Jesus* (1946) and his *Handbook to the Life and Times of St Teresa and St John of the Cross* (1954) (cf THE CLERGY MONTHLY 1954, p 276) are works of outstanding and lasting value He had a special talent for translating, both accurately and artistically, the 16th-century Castilian of the great Teresa

Under review is a reprint of the 1951 edition of the letters This corpus contains 458 letters, covering the years 1541-1582 Her correspondents were many and varied King Philip II, archbishops, Jerome Gracian, the first general of the Spanish O C D, her spiritual daughters, friends and supporters, members of her own family Many letters are lost, for instance those to Isabel Domingo and St John of the Cross The character, shrewdness and great practical ability of St Teresa stand out in Allison Peers' preface and introduction to the letters (Vol I, pp 1-23)

The reprint was brought out to prepare the commemoration of the fourth centenary of the Avila saint whom we celebrate this year It is most welcome

E R HAMBYE, S J

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JOURNAL OF THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Vol. XLVI **JULY 1982** **No. 6 7**

In This Issue

There was a time in the Western tradition when the theology of men's salvation in Jesus Christ so stressed his sacrificial death on the cross that the significance of the resurrection was for the most part overlooked A strong reaction has set in in recent decades, and much theological literature has been written to show once again that the resurrection of Christ stands at the centre of the message, without it the Christian message would not be about life and hope But the pendulum, as the danger always is, may have swung too far. A renewed theology of the cross is the need of the day and is in the making In an article entitled "The Resurrection in the Context of the Theology of the Cross", Friday M MBON of the University of Calabar, Nigeria, shows that the resurrection derives its meaning and value from the cross, the two are inseparable and must be kept in tension

Films can be a powerful means for the education of the masses, especially in countries with a high percentage of illiteracy Rita MONTEIRO shows that the theme of social justice has made a significant entry into the Indian film production in recent decades Some of the best film-makers in the country have spent their talent to expose and denounce social evils This effort deserves our sympathy and support, if it is true that the promotion of justice is an integral part of the Church's evangelising mission

The January issue of VIDYAJYOTI announced the Consultation on Priestly Formation in North India which has taken place in Varanasi at the end of February Fr G GISPERT-SAUCH now reports on the consultation and assesses its results Recommendations have been made the implementation of which should be an advance in meeting the real situation, yet a certain lack of clarity still prevails with regard to the Church's mission in North India, which will require further clarifications

Fr G. LOBO comments on the Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* in which Pope John Paul II resumes and prolongs the work of the 1980 Synod of Bishops on The Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World.

The Resurrection in the Context of the Theology of the Cross

FRIDAY M. MBON*

The question of the relationship between cross and resurrection is the most difficult one in Christian theology

Douglas HALL[1]

The joy of the Resurrection requires first death on the Cross — and this can take differing forms

Gustavo GUTIÉRREZ[2]

In a way the whole presentation of the *Via Crucis* is a witness and an interpretation of the Resurrection

D M MACKINNON[3]

I. *Introduction*

Ernst Kasemann has rightly remarked that the question of the relationship between a theology of the cross and a theology of the resurrection is "the principal issue in the current christological debate and therefore the cardinal point in present-day theological controversy"[4] There are those who say "*crux sola nostra theologia*",[5] others declare that the theology of the resurrection is "the cardinal element in early Christian thoughts", "the Archimedean point for theology as such", and that "without the Easter event the cross of Jesus bears the stamp of a purely immanent happening"[6] Kunneth further maintains that Paul used the resurrection event as a basis for his understanding and preaching of the cross.[7] In the same vein, Arthur Michael Ramsey says "The Resurrection is a true starting-point for the study

*Friday M MBON is a lecturer in the Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy at the University of Calabar, Nigeria

1 *Lighten Our Darkness Toward an Indigenous Theology of the Cross* (Philadelphia The Westminster Press, 1976), p 122

2 "Liberation, Theology and Proclamation", in *The Mystical and Political Dimension of the Christian Faith*, ed Claude GEFFRÉ and Gustavo GUTIÉRREZ (New York Herder & Herder, 1974), p 77

3 *The Resurrection A Dialogue Arising from Broadcasts by G W H Lampe and D M MacKinnon*, ed William PURCELL (London A R Mowbray & Co, 1966), p 67

4. "The Pauline Theology of the Cross", *Interpretation*, 24, n 2 (1970), p 166

5 Especially the nineteenth-century historical critics of the New Testament.

6 Walter KÜNNETH, *The Theology of the Resurrection* (London SCM Press, 1965), pp 18, 294, 151

7 Ibid, p 152, note 7.

of the making and the meaning of the New Testament's Käsemann overstates the case, perhaps, by saying:

> A theology of resurrection that does not become a theology of the cross is bound to lead . . to wrong-headed enthusiasm, and therefore to another form of the theology of glory against which the Reformation fought.

After reading a statement like this, one wonders if the theology of resurrection *necessarily* has to *become* the theology of the cross, in order for one to be able to appreciate the connection between the two.

The present essay is no apologetic on the subject of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It does not attempt to prove or disprove the facticity and historicity or, for that matter, the nature, of the Easter event. That task has been attempted in many different places, including David Friedrich Strauss' *Life of Christ* (1848) and Gerald O'Collins' *What Are They Saying about the Resurrection* ? (1978) Nor does this discussion deal exclusively with the relationship between the New Testament theologies of the cross and the resurrection as such, although some reference is made to this relationship Rather, assuming as a historical fact the New Testament account of the resurrection story, it endeavours to examine the theology of the resurrection in the context of Luther's *theologia crucis*,[10] indicating that there is an intimate link between a true theology of the resurrection and a true theology of the cross

II. *The Cross, the Resurrection, and the Call to Suffer*

Luther has defined a theologian as one who "comprehends the visible and manifest things of God seen through suffering and the cross" [11] Perhaps we could extend this definition of the theologian to include the Christian, for every Christian is to some degree a theologian The Christian, too, ought to be encouraged to see "the visible and manifest things of God" through the suffering and the cross of

---

8 *The Resurrection of Christ An Essay in Biblical Theology* (London· The Centenary Press, 1945), p 7

9. *Jesus Means Freedom A Polemical Survey of the New Testament* (London· SCM Press, 1969), p 82

10 In this essay "*theologia crucis*" or its English translation, "the theology of the cross", is used in the Lutheran sense roughly to mean that theological method which contextualizes Christian theology, and discusses this theology with reference to temporal realities It refers specifically to a way of recognizing and articulating the negative — suffering, evil, sin, or whatever produces darkness and anxiety in the human condition This "tradition" calls sin or evil by its right name, and does not attempt to take refuge in false optimistic expectations It is honest about the reality of the negative in human existence, and neither attempts to minimize nor overlook that reality But the term is also used in the Pauline sense (especially in its English translation) to refer to the function and role of the cross of Christ in Pauline theology of the atonement and soteriology

11 *Luther Works*, vol 31, eds Harold J. GRIMM and Helmut T. LEHMANN (Philadelphia· Muhlenberg Press, 1957), p. 40.

the Man Jesus. The resurrection of this Man is a visible manifestation of God's power However, too often, many a Christian has seen and celebrated this divine power simply as though it were a crossless victory.

Käsemann has chastized modern, triumphalistic Christendom, including, ironically, today's "Reformation Churches", for forgetting the spirit of the Reformation which "aimed at pursuing a theology of the cross in contrast to a theology of glory", lamenting that today "the reality of the resurrection has to be the conquest and the end of the way of the cross The two are separated from each other in contrast, as in the saying 'Through the cross to the crown !' "[12] Käsemann then counsels·

> If we are to remain in the reformed tradition, the reformers' view of the theology of the cross as antithetic to the theology of glory must in all circumstances be contained today in the antithesis of the theology of the cross to a definite and even dominating theology of resurrection Whenever the resurrection message obscures or restricts, even in the least degree, the message of the cross, the resurrection is not rightly taught, either in the Pauline or in the reformers' sense [13]

It would seem that what we Christians need to know is that the victory and glory of the resurrection were made possible through the pathway of suffering and cross-bearing, and that we are called upon to share in this suffering and cross-bearing, if we must share in the bliss and glory of the resurrection Indeed, what we probably need to know *first* is that unless the death of Jesus is seen not as any other death, but as the "death of the cross" (Phil 2 8), we will never grasp in its depth the significance of the incomparable amount of suffering and humiliation to which Christ was subjected For Paul's emphasis on this particular aspect of his Christology is not merely on the fact that Christ did die, but on the fact that he died the shameful death of the cross.

Seen through his cross, then, the glory of Christ's resurrection will become more meaningful to the Christian, and he will begin to appreciate in a new way "what is the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead" (Eph 1·19, 20) That is to say, it is only as we let the light of the resurrection break through the darkness that encircles the cross, that we can fully appreciate the glory and salvific implications of the cross and the resurrection To state the same point more clearly, this means that the cross must be allowed to interpret and inform the resurrection,

12. *The Resurrection of Christ*, pp 68-69.
13 Ibid., p 69.

and the resurrection to throw light on the significance of the cross *vis-à-vis* salvation history (*Heilsgeschichte*).

The trouble with Christians today is the same as the trouble with the Corinthian Christians of Paul's day, and with the ancient Church. The problem with these forerunners of present-day Christianity, as Kasemann has pointed out, was this:

> The Corinthians thought that Jesus had borne the cross in order that his followers might participate now in his exaltation The ancient Church developed the idea and declared that Christ became man in order that we might become divine [14]

This attitude is obviously the mark of our triumphalistic twentieth-century Christianity, especially in the progress- and technology-drunk Western culture where people struggle daily for glory and exaltation, and have become technology-produced gods, a phenomenon Jurgen Moltmann calls man's "self-deification" [15]

In spite of the modern attitude towards the cross and suffering, the fact still remains that God not only uses them to make the resurrection possible, but continues to associate them with the risen Christ. This is the lesson Jesus meant to teach the rich young ruler when he told him "One thing thou lackest go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast and give to the poor and come, take up the cross, and follow me" (Mark 10 21) What this means *for us today* is that following the resurrected Christ involves taking up the cross of reality in its multifarious forms. As Kasemann says

> according to 2 Corinthians 4 10 we reveal the life of Jesus only when we bear in our bodies the death of Jesus This is true of every messenger of the Gospel, and therefore true of every Christian A person stands as a follower of Jesus only as long as he stands under the shadow of the cross, and, according to the unusually terse word in 2 Corinthians 13 4, we manifest the heavenly power of Jesus only as we accept his weakness in our earthly life [16]

The point is elaborated on by Hall when he says

> The church lives only as it is given over daily to participation in the death of the cross Only as it is itself denied the glory that it craves can it become the friend of those who can no longer pretend to glory Only as it is itself denied the expansiveness and power and authority it covets can it be equipped to accompany men and nations into the depths of humiliation Only as it is brought again and again to the experience of its own limits will it be able to participate in the life of a whole age which has been brought face to face with the limits of human endeavour and the human species Only as it looks for light in darkness, hope in the midst of despair, possibilities at the edge of the

14 "The Pauline Theology of the Cross", op cit, p 177
15 See Jurgen MOLTMANN, *The Crucified God* (London SCM Press, 1974).
16 "The Pauline Theology of the Cross", op cit, pp 156-157

Red Sea, a way beyond failure, will it be a fit counselor to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.[17]

The same point is underscored by Käsemann when he says:

> We cannot share in Christ's glory except by bearing his cross after him on earth .. Christian experience thrives only under the cross If it breaks away from that place, even by a very little, if it is wearing a halo that keeps the shadow from being seen, then that life is not Christian On earth there is no sharing in the glory of the risen Lord except in the discipleship of the cross To put it forcibly where Lazarus is raised, there is still floating in the air the smell of the corpse that has been rotting for four days Anyone who tones this down does not know that resurrection, like birth, is a painful thing, and that the first impression given by a man coming out of the grave is one of terror His theology of resurrection remains, at least on earth, a dream [18]

The message of these passages is quite clear we cannot participate truly in the resurrection event without being willing to participate in the cross event As Willard Brewing has said of true religion, the resurrection is not "a haven to winter in, but a harbour to sail from" [19] That is to say, the path to resurrection glory is marked with crosses For the rich young ruler the cross meant the pain of giving up self and his riches, and the humility of becoming poor with the poor. For Paul it meant tremendous risk and suffering

> Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more, in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep, In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of mine own countrywmen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren, In weariness and painfulness, in watching often, in hunger and thirst, in fasting often, in cold and nakedness Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not? (2 Cor 11 23-29)

For us the cross may mean a thousand other things. For instance, it may mean "the suffering of intellectual wrestling with truth and doubt" (William Wolf). Or it may mean, as Kasemann suggests, suffering "under the pious and the ungodly, under tyrants and institutions" [20] It may mean trying to find meaning "out of an ever-renewed confrontation with the sense of meaninglessness and the absurd".[21] Whatever it means to us, its essence will be the same today

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17 *Lighten Our Darkness*, p 220
18 *Jesus Means Freedom* pp 71-72, 83
19 *Faith for These Times* (Toronto Collins, 1945), inside of front jacket
20. *Jesus Means Freedom*, p 80
21. HALL, op cit, p 223

as it was when Christ walked this earth: suffering with the Suffering Servant.

Indeed we are called upon to learn of the "gentle and lowly" Christ by participating in his yoke and burden in the here and now (Mat 11:29-30; 16:24). "When Christ calls a man", says Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "he bids him come and die. .. In fact every command of Jesus is a call to die" [22] Bonhoeffer further correctly remarks that the cross is laid on every Christian, and that one is a true follower of Christ only as one is willing to take up his cross. R R. Niebuhr expresses the same fact when he says·

> . our Christian faith, if it be founded in history at all, is anchored not only upon the historical event of Jesus Christ, but also upon our own participation in the same kind of historicity that we attribute to him [23]

But "the historical event of Jesus" consists not only of his resurrection, but also of his suffering Therefore, we are called upon to participate in both aspects of his historical event We might say, in fact, that the capacity and willingness to suffer with the Suffering Servant of history are a prerequisite for participating in the glory of the resurrection As Ramsey says "to worship the risen Jesus is to accept the Cross in virtue of which he triumphed to believe in the Crucified is to adhere to one who conquers and reigns "[24] And what R R. Niebuhr says of the early disciples who met and rejoiced *in* and *with* the risen Christ may be said apropos about those who claim to be the Lord's disciples today "Only those who acknowledged his part in their own past, and their part in his past of rejection, suffering and death, could recognize the risen Christ "[25]

T B. Maston has remarked

> A marvelous and abiding truth is that crucifixion and resurrection are linked together Jesus in the same breath that he mentioned his death mentioned also his resurrection There is no truth more fundamental in his teachings than the statement that follows his invitation for the disciples to take up their cross and follow him There must be a real crucifixion for there to be a real resurrection In turn, there is no real crucifixion unless it is voluntary and redemptive in purpose [26]

What all this means is that neither the cross nor the resurrection should be viewed as a self-contained theology, but that both should be perceived as a double perspective both find expression in the one

22. *The Cost of Discipleship*, trans R H Fuller, rev ed (New York Macmillan, 1959), p 79.
23 *Resurrection and Historical Reason A Study of Theological Method* (New York. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957), p v
24 RAMSEY, op. cit., p 17.
25. R R. NIEBUHR, op cit., p 181.
26. *Biblical Ethics· A Survey* (Waco, Texas. Word Books, 1967), p 163

reality of, to use Niebuhr's phrase, "the historical event of Jesus Christ", especially when that event is spoken of in terms of soteriology.

A proper understanding of the resurrection story, therefore, does not see in the Calvary event an excuse for the type of easy, bed-of-roses life of expectations we see among Christians today. Rather, it sees in the resurrection a call and challenge for humble and appreciative service in the cause of the risen Christ In 2 Corinthians 11.23-29 (quoted above), it is important to note that Paul recognizes his human weakness and limitation This recognition, as Hall has pointed out, is a necessary ingredient of the theology of the cross, but it is also the very ingredient which is lacking in the "cultural Christianity" of Western optimistic theology of glory Christians today must be aware of their human weakness and limitation, in order that, out of this weakness they might be made strong (Heb 11.34, 2 Cor 13 4). "Where man has to admit his powerlessness", states F X. Durrwell, "the power of God appears"[27] The Christian Church must also be aware as MacKinnon has pointed out, that true spirituality which is related to the resurrection is bound up with a willingness to let go her own self-image, a willingness to suffer even to the point of death Says MacKinnon

> . men have found that the way of Jesus, the way through death to Resurrection, illuminates, if it does not wholly condition, their spiritual lives We know, most of us, what it is to be broken, to shed, at least, some of the illusions we have about ourselves, and we know that these moments can be a kind of death, a death, too, that we must accept for only as we accept it, as we go down into it, can we find renewal, or rather, be overtaken by the renewing hand of God We must die And in his death he (Christ) gathers the dying of men into that his archetypal self-surrender And if we make of our very incompleteness, of the fragmentary brokenness of our lives, of which death is the most eloquent sign, an act of love towards him, then assuredly we have lived and died in some understanding of the mystery of the Resurrection of Christ from the dead [28]

Obviously, the kind of death of which MacKinnon speaks here is the same as that about which Paul speaks when he says "I die daily" (1 Cor 15·31) And it is significant that Paul says this in the very chapter in which he discusses the subject of the resurrection of Christ Paul, as we will recall, suffered a great many afflictions for the sake of his risen Lord (2 Cor 11 23, 29, Phil 3 8) As an appreciation for the grace of God which is evident in both the Calvary and resurrection events, Paul, after his encounter with the risen Christ on Damascus road, devoted the rest of his life to the cause of God and of humanity

27 *The Resurrection A Biblical Study* (London Sheed and Ward, 1960), p. 344

28 *The Resurrection A Dialogue*, pp 69-70

He deprived himself of the luxuries of this life, in order that he may bear the cross that is inevitable in truly appreciating and appropriating for oneself the glory of the resurrection

And Paul did all this under this conviction: "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil 1 21) Only a man who has been "crucified with Christ" (Gal 2 20; and Paul wrote these words from a prison cell, cf Gal 6 14) can make such a claim Indeed, Paul would know and preach nothing "save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor 2 2, cf 1 23) Thus Paul had responded positively to Christ's command · "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Mat 16 24) And to be crucified with Christ means to suffer the things Christ suffered, it means to suffer with the suffering two-thirds of the world's population (especially the so-called Third World), it further means the capacity to "rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep (Rom 12 15). Or, as Gutiérrez puts it, it means to "become poor with the poor .. This will be a way of identifying oneself with Christ"[29] As Hall has clearly indicated, the theology of today's affluent society, particularly North American, does not emphasize this essential aspect of the theology of the cross — this experience of negation which dying daily and being crucified with the risen Christ call for What the theology of the cross is essentially advocating, is that the followers of this Christ let this experience of negation sweep over into the positive in the experience of the resurrection.

In reality, the glory and joy of the resurrection are a gift ot the Christian, but they are a gift that is accompanied by an obligation which demands that the follower of Christ continue to repeat daily in his life the suffering of the cross-bearing Christ It is in this experience that the Christian meets the resurrected Christ daily at the foot of the cross — when he, recognizing his helplessness, brings all his anxieties and cares to the One who has promised to give him rest from his burden (Mat 11 28) In other words, man's sense of darkness, of suffering and woe, should cause him to seek refuge in the Rock of Ages

Kneel at the Cross,
Christ will meet you there,
Come while he waits for you,
List to his voice,
Leave with him your care
And begin life anew[30]

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29 "Liberation, Theology and Proclamation," op cit, p 64, cf p 66
30. Chase E MOODY, "Kneel at the Cross".

But this invitation to come to the Jesus of the Cross, who is also the Jesus of the resurrection, demands at least two qualifications on the part of the invitee First, he must *kneel* in humility. That is, he must be humble enough to recognize in Jesus someone greater than himself who deserves his reverence Second, he must have "cares" which induce him to seek help from a Source outside himself. However, to the proud, self-sufficient man of our century, who refuses to admit that he has cares, this invitation means nothing. Certainly not if it asks him to be humble ! This self-sufficient product of our modern, technocratic optimism, who sees only the bright side of life and deliberately closes his eyes to the dark side, refuses to come to the cross, thereby failing to come in contact with the crucified Christ The invitation remains, therefore, only for the beggars, to use Luther's expression,[31] whose crosses (poverty, mourning, hunger — spiritual or physical) lead them to the cross of Christ for help Life's crosses, we might say therefore, are a necessary schoolmaster, to use Paul's terminology, which leads to Christ

It is unfortunate that modern Christianity tends to celebrate the resurrection either by pushing the cross of Christ to the periphery or by making no mention of it at all Such an attitude, of course, has come under severe attack by such critics of the Church as Kierkegaard and Hall [32] The theology of the resurrection that does not take into account the theology of the cross (especially in the sense Luther uses the latter expression), is bound to become what Luther called a mere *theologia gloriae* which, as contrasted by him with the *theologia crucis*, does not call things what they *really* are The theology of glory, said Luther, "calls evil good and good evil" [33] That is to say, the theology of glory is a theology that deliberately closes its eye to the reality of human problems, and indulges itself in the false celebration of the glory of modern man – a glory based on a wrong concept of the theology of resurrection Such a theology is a theology of illusion — a theology which is unsatisfactory or even offensive to the mind which cannot reconcile the tantalizing promises or "expectations" of this theology with what it *really* experiences in life As Hall says "A Gospel that can be believed only at the cost of oblivion to human experience is no Gospel, but the betrayal of the Gospel"[34] In the final analysis, the theology of glory attempts to do away with the whole

31 Quoted in HALL, op cit, p 117

32 See, for instance, KIERKEGAARD's *Attack Upon Christendom* 1854-1855, trans with an introduction by Walter LOWRIE (Princeton University Press, 1946), and HALL's *Lighten Our Darkness*

33. *Luther Works*, vol 31, p 40

34 HALL, op cit, p. 135.

idea of the cross — Christ's or man's (Hall). But, says Hall, "it will no longer help to remove Christ from the cross or the cross from human existence"[35] On this same point Käsemann comments.

> Dogmatic definitions which do not actualize themselves in suffering discipleship make the piety of the Churches illusory, and an abstract Christianity is totally uninteresting to the world To believe and proclaim Jesus as Lord does not prove anything, rather, everything depends on whether Christian piety accepts the cross as the basis and norm for everyday living[36]

The theology of the cross, says Kasemann elsewhere, "remains directed towards earthly realities, instead of fleeing into heavenly realms."[37] Furthermore, the theology of the cross, according to Moltmann,

> leads to criticism of the self-glorification of dehumanized man and to his liberation, and is directly associated with the human way of life and practice chosen by this congregation of weak, lowly and despised persons, a way of life which takes away the power of the social circumstances which bring about the aggression of dehumanized man, and endeavours to overcome it[38]

All these remarks are obviously different ways of attempting to articulate the basic thesis of Luther's *theologia crucis*, as contrasted with the *theologia gloriae* the former, unlike the latter, boldly looks at the reality of evil in the human situation, and "calls the thing what it actually is" (Luther), "it does not seek to escape the confrontation with the most radical contemporary manifestation of the nihil."[39]

III. *The Cross and the Resurrection Are Linked*

When all has been said, it really seems that the distinction between a theology of the cross and a theology of the resurrection is at best apparent, at worst false For no theologian can *honestly* reflect on a theology of the cross without at the same time giving recognition to the fact that the Christ event did not end at Calvary On the other hand, no *honest* theological reflection on the resurrection can overlook the fact that without the cross the resurrection would not have taken place. Undeniably, the resurrection is a triumphant divine event; but its triumph becomes more glaring and more fully appreciable under the shadow of the cross On the other hand, as Kasemann rightly remarks, "the cross was experienced as an impenetrable enigma which was solved only by Easter."[40]

That there is an intimate relationship between the cross and the resurrection, there is therefore no question In fact, it is because of

35 Ibid, p 136
36 "The Pauline Theology of the Cross", op cit, pp 157-158
37 *Jesus Means Freedom*, p 80
38 *The Crucified God*, p 70
39 HALL, op cit, p 208
40 "The Pauline Theology of the Cross", op cit, p 173

this inseparable link between the two that Kasemann regards the cross as "a chapter of the theology of resurrection".[41] Käsemann makes the same point a little differently elsewhere when he says "The point is that the resurrection is one aspect of the message of the cross, not that the cross is simply one chapter in a book of resurrection dogmatics".[42] He further states that the cross will ever remain "the signature of the risen Lord", and that "unless the resurrected Jesus is confessed as the crucified Lord, the resurrection becomes only an ideogram for glorification of the world".[43] But the later Barth, who allowed himself to be won over by the triumphalistic interpreters of the resurrection, would answer Kasemann by stating an opposite position. "We have to do with the Crucified only as the Resurrected There is no going back behind Easter morning !"[44] While both emphases may be theologically justifiable, one has to look beyond theology and doctrine, to the ruling passion of the age in which either position is held, *in order to be able to determine the ethical rightness or wrongness* of each position For, as Hall has pointed out, there are times and places when and where either point of view can be justifiably and acceptably stressed, and contexts in which to do so would be ridiculously out of place For instance, Barth's emphasis on a triumphant resurrection, or Moltmann's theology of hope, may be immediately defensible in the hopeless situation of post-war Europe, but extraneous in another country where the socio-political conditions did not call for any theology of comfort or hope, but for a theology of action ![45]

In spite of this question as to when and where to place the emphasis, the inherent relation between the cross and the resurrection still stands Paul calls attention to it in the following passage:

> Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life (Rom 6 3-4, RSV)

This means that for the Christian fully to share in the joy and glory of the resurrection of Christ (present), and to experience the joy and

41 Ibid p 177 Although recognizing the inseparability of the cross and the resurrection, KASEMANN, in the same article seems to suggest a separation between the two He says "The sign which distinguishes his (Christ's) Lordship from that of the other founders of religion is undoubtedly only the cross If theology is to make irreversible declarations concerning Jesus, then all its assertions must be related to the cross And in the same way discipleship must be and remain nothing but following the Crucified The cross is the foundation and the criterion of Christology (p 172)

42 *Jesus Means Freedom* p 68

43 "The Pauline Theology of the Cross", op cit , pp 174-175, cf *Jesus Means Freedom*, pp 67-68

44 BARTH, *Church Dogmatics*, vol IV/I, p 343

45 See HALL, op cit., pp. 139ff

glory of his own eschatological resurrection (future), he must have been willing literally and symbolically to be "baptized into his death" (past). That is to say, the joy that is now available in the resurrected Christ can be realized fully only by those who have suffered *sun Christô* For, as Moltmann says, brotherhood with the risen Christ must be preceded by the suffering and active participation in the history of the crucified God [46]

Also, that there is an intrinsic connection between the cross and the resurrection is further suggested by Paul's imagery of the seed and the plant (1 Cor 15 35ff) The seed must be planted (buried) in order to give birth to a new plant. The process of germination involves death and decay But these are necessary for the production of new life So with the Christian life The Christian must die to self and sin, in order to be resurrected to live with his resurrected Lord This kind of spiritual death to sin, self-sufficiency and selfishness, is the cross which the Christian is called upon to bear But, "much Church business and activity today", laments William Wolf, "frustrate this great invitation to suffer redemptively Creative Cross-bearing (!) to which we are plainly summoned by the teaching of our Lord, is just the missing element that would constitute the dynamic of a revitalized Church "[47]

It is only when we fully understand the intimacy of the relation between the cross and the resurrection of Christ, that we can really grasp what it means to say that to walk with the risen Christ is not a crossless experience Rather, it is an experience which might demand of the follower of Christ suffering and persecution

> Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you (Mat 5 10-12, RSV)

What we have here is the fact that the path to the Kingdom of God (realized or eschatological) is paved with persecution and "all kinds of evil", and that there is no escaping these evils for the one who is truly following the risen Christ. As G W H Lampe has said

> Easter does not guarantee an easy comfortable time all round On the contrary, the unquenched light of the world shines most brightly in the long line of the martyrs, from Peter and Paul at Rome in the year 65 or thereabouts to James Reeb in Selma, Alabama, in the year 1965 [48]

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46 *The Crucified God*, p 338

47 *No Cross, No Crown. A Study of the Atonement* (1957, rpt Hamden, Conn Archon Books, 1962), p 207

48 *The Resurrection A Dialogue*, pp 11-12.

In the same vein Hall writes:

> The cross of the world and of man remains after all the Easter sermons have been preached and all the Halleluiahs sung 'Vietnam' has not disappeared Nor have our own deepest personal involvements in the night We cannot indulge in expectations of release which are only credible to those who are prepared 'to call evil good' The test of expectation is whether it articulates itself from the cross, from the grave, from hell — and knows it ![49]

Moreover, the encounter with the risen Christ may involve personal loss, even of the follower's life·

> whoever of you does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple (Luke 14 33)

> He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it (Mat 10 39)

Thus, we see that the path leading to the risen Christ is not an easy road, it has its thorns and trials, and the follower of the resurrected Lord who closes his eyes to these crosses of the Christ road is dishonest, not only to himself but also to his Lord and others As Hall has shown, it is not difficult to find, especially in the officially optimistic and triumphalistic North American cultural Christianity, Christians who, influenced by their optimistic culture, refuse to see the crosses of human existence The presence of Christian positivists and optimists in North America, for instance, is eloquent on this matter. It is indeed ironic that the risen Christ should stand in our midst, "touched with feeling of *our* infirmities"-- socio-political, economic, spiritual, psychological -- and yet we pretend not to have infirmities ! Such an ironic situation is like that of a man laying on a hospital bed and telling the doctor that he is not sick !

Wilhelm Herrmann has pointed out (though he rejects the historicity of the resurrection), that our awareness of Christ's perennial parousia (Mat 28 19-20) becomes truly vivacious only "when at the same time we picture to ourselves Jesus' death on the cross"[50] That is to say, the presence of the risen Christ becomes spiritually significant to the Christian only when he is willing to take a fresh look at the cross and to share in its shame However, for modern, proud and presumptuous man,

> the cross of Jesus still remains scandal and offense insofar as it exposes man's illusion that he can transcend himself, work out his own salvation, and

49 HALL, op cit, p 121

50 Wilhelm HERRMANN, *Systematic Theology*, trans Nathaniel Micklem and Kenneth A Saunders (1927), p 84 Historical critics, especially of the nineteenth century, such as Strauss, Herrmann, Schweitzer, and particularly Harnack (in whom the movement finds the most trenchant expression), characteristically moved from glorifying the resurrection to glorifying Golgotha But here again the falsity of the deliberate separation between the cross and the resurrection is obvious.

> exalt himself against God by his own capabilities, whether of strength, wisdom, piety or self-love [51]

Jesus' cross, says Käsemann, is God's effort to call man back from his "delusory heroism to the human condition of creaturehood".[52] Or, as Moltmann puts it, the theology of the cross aims at destroying "the god, miserable in his pride, which we would like to be" and at restoring to us "our abandoned and despised humanity. The knowledge of the cross brings a conflict of interest between God who has become man and man who wishes to become God."[53]

Hall has further said of Luther's *theologia crucis*

> the theology of the cross as Luther elaborates it takes its stand *within* the experience of negation It neither minimizes nor seeks to absorb the evil and impossibility of human existence into a finally triumphant goodness The negative is not annulled by an overwhelming positive Evil remains evil, and the theology of the cross does not have to lie about it it can 'call the thing what it actually is' It must correspond with reality [54]

These remarks sum up trenchantly the whole programme of Luther's so-called "thin tradition", and express well the sense in which "*theologia crucis*" is generally used in this essay. Thus, the theology of the cross may, indeed, be said to be a theology of temporal realities But such a theology, understandably, does not ride readily with modern whimsical positivism and quixotic and blind optimism There is no wonder, then, that such a theology which attempts to destroy human pride, self-deification, and expectations, is vehemently resented by today's positive Christianity Luther's *theologia crucis* thus spells a sense of suffering, and is therefore an offence to modern mentality. Hence man rejects it and seeks refuge in the delusory theology of glory.

IV. *The Cross, the Resurrection and Social Action*

Having said all this, we must add that, within the context of the theology of the cross, a true theology of the resurrection has to find expression in redemptive contextual social action, if it must be relevant to contemporary human situation. That is to say, it must get actively and positively involved in the practical processes which seek to liberate man physically and spiritually Only thus can a theology of resurrection express itself in ethico-socio-political terms — a need Luther failed to urge in his exposition of his *theologia crucis*.[55] A theology of resurrection must get involved in the process of social reformation,

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51 KASEMANN, "The Pauline Theology of the Cross", op cit, p 159.
52 Ibid, p 160
53 MOLTMANN, *The Crucified God*, p. 71
54 HALL, op cit, pp 120, 134
55. See HALL, op cit, pp 146-147

in order to maintain its link with the theology of the cross. Unless it does this, it becomes merely "an interesting (or boring) religious mental exercise of little substance or value"[56] Active participation in the cross event and genuine involvement in the resurrection story energize and vitalize the Christian community, and, consequently, send it out into the world to function as the salt of the earth

Such involvement in contextual socio-political processes of liberation may bring suffering upon the Christian participants As William Johnston has said "Love for the oppressed may bring one into conflict with the rich and powerful and with the establishment So it was with Jesus, so it will be with his followers"[57] But that kind of vicarious suffering is necessary for the emancipation of mankind from universal human suffering[58] And it must be stressed that in participating in these processes of liberation, the Christian community must do so honestly, calling the attention of the people for whom it works to the reality of evil in the human situation — a reality which still exists, as we have said, in spite of the triumph of the resurrection For,

> there is no easier way to perpetuate the rejection of Christianity today by those who could be its greatest advocates than by continuing to present to men the Jesus of Easter triumph (without giving) evidence in their words and deeds of knowing the extent of the degradation to which it is possible for human life to sink[59]

V. *Conclusion*

We have said that the cross and the resurrection are two sides of a single coin - that they belong together inseparably *vis-à-vis* soteriology Indeed, as we have endeavoured to show, the Bible forbids any hiatus between the two. Both must be seen as organically united We have said also that before the Christian can truly and fully share in the glory and triumph of the resurrection, he must be prepared to suffer with his crucified Lord, for "the glory of Jesus consists in the fact that he makes his disciples on earth willing and capable to bear the cross after him "[60] But in saying this, we are by no means suggesting that the follower of Christ should go about looking for crosses to bear

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56 KASEMANN, *Jesus Means Freedom* p 84

57 *The Inner Eye of Love Mysticism and Religion* (New York Harper & Row, 1978), p 132

58 Here we are not advocating unqualified Christian meddling in socio-political activities such as those advocated by some exponents of "liberation theology" and "political theology" We feel that once we as Christians begin to sound like professional politicians or social reformers, then we have gone too far and stand in danger of losing the game !

59 HALL, op cit, p 141

60 KASEMANN, "The Pauline Theology of the Cross", op cit, p 177

To do so would be masochism or even downright madness "The cross", Moltmann has said, "is not and cannot be loved "[61] The point is we must recognize the fact that this life is full of crosses — war, poverty, inequality, oppression, injustice, the abuse of power and wealth, crime, human greed — and, having recognized that fact, be prepared to look the crosses in the eye whenever they show their ugly faces, in whatever form This is what the theology of the cross challenges us to do — to face the hard and harsh realities of life without hiding under false expectations and optimism, which lead us to believe that earth has no sorrows that heaven cannot cure, or to fall into the illusion of attempting to find "heavenly" answers to every earthly problem Facing this challenge of the theology of the cross can ultimately perform an instructive if not, in fact, a soteriological function: many today have moved Godward from their experience with mystery, anguish, and tragedy

The triumph of Easter, we have observed, has not annulled the presence of the night of human experience Rather, the resurrection invites us into the darkness of that night so that, as Wallace Stevens would put it, the eye of faith may begin to see It is within this perspective that we can hear more clearly the message of the resurrection in the context of the *theologia crucis* It is within this perspective, too, that we can answer in the affirmative Hall's question as to whether it is possible for Luther's *theologia crucis* to be allowed a place under the banner of Christian theology [62]

61 *The Crucified God*, p 1.
62. HALL, op cit, p 139.

Social Justice in Indian Films

Rita MONTEIRO

MRINAL Sen, internationally known Bengali film-maker, as the Indian delegate to an international symposium on cinema and society sponsored by UNESCO, the U.S National Commission for UNESCO and the American Film Institute, said that, in his opinion, "a work of art is useful if it provokes you in many ways, on many planes and makes you emotionally active". One of the most articulate film-makers in India, Sen believes by the same token that "film-makers in developing countries should capture injustice on the screen In India and throughout the Third World, poverty is an important and disturbing part of the social fabric and film-makers cannot escape it" Most film-makers do not accept this as their credo, which accounts for the large number of films made in India just for entertainment of a mass audience which is largely illiterate, or semi-literate. These films in Hindi and the regional languages do not intend to conscientize these audiences Instead, they offer a fantastic dream-world, into which the viewer can escape, of songs, dances, elaborate and rich costumes, palatial houses and a thin story-line within which the heroes and heroines defy every rule of credibility

Social Injustices Revealed by Film Makers

However, there are film-makers — directors, producers, script writers and lyric writers — who have been sensitised to the discrimination and inhumanity which is an integral part of Indian society Grinding poverty and illiteracy make millions of our people insects, to be crushed under the heel of the man or woman who has complete control of their capacity to work Conscience and the dignity of the human person become obscenities to those who manipulate the strings of power for their own personal benefit The political system is also operated in order to keep the poor at the line of mere existence, intimidated by the destruction of their lives and pitiful homes, whenever any attempt is made to assert their rights, or to claim a better deal for themselves

This is the world of the indigent which the socially committed Indian film-maker puts onto celluloid in order to make known the truth about the existence of the larger majority of our fellow country-

men and women "Liberation, in the social sense begins with the knowledge of truth",[1] and these films make the truth known to millions of viewers. They aim at educating those who are exploited and those who are insufficiently attuned to the level of exploitation, so that awareness may set in motion the wheels of change

I wish to focus in this article on some Indian film-makers who deliberately use the art of film-making to expose the level of social injustice in India and to put forward social and political programmes for change and progress Sometimes the film-maker might express explicit political credos which will aim at changing social evils At other times, he may present psychological dispositions or attitudes, those deep layers of collective mentality which extend more or less below the dimensions of consciousness Thus films may show that those who are oppressed must liberate themselves If political parties do not serve the common man, but exploit him, they must be voted out of power Political parties which will make real programmes for the betterment of the under-privileged, must be given power Through concrete images on the screen, the strangling grip of social structures such as the caste system, social strictures on widows, the persecution by society of those who wish to rehabilitate themselves such as prostitutes and those with a criminal record, are shown with a clarity that overcomes the barriers of class and education, or complete lack of it Powerful suggestions are made to the mind of the viewer that these are intolerable bonds because they are irrational and inhuman

I have chosen in particular the work of Mrinal Sen and Shyam Benegal, some directors of Malayalam cinema and the Tamil films made by Annadurai, Karunanidhi, and M G Ramachandran (1949-1977), because the theme of social justice gives a stamp of authenticity to their creative work

Mrinal Sen — To Grow an Attitude

In order to bring about any social change, it is necessary to change people's attitudes Mrinal Sen in his book *Views on Cinema* says: "I have tried to understand my own time and thus to grow an attitude To grow an attitude means to put soul into your work, to make yours a dynamic concept" This being so, Mrinal Sen's film "Calcutta 71" has powerful, unforgetable images of famished generations, physically and mentally devastated by extreme poverty It opens with a voice intoning resonantly the passage which follows, while a young man of twenty walks through four centuries of history.

1. *The Theme of Liberation, Texts of John Paul II,* St Paul's Publications.

I am twenty For the last 1000 years,
I have been living this age of twenty
For the last 1000 years, I have been
passing through terrible times
I have walked through poverty, squalor and death
For the last 1000 years, I have been
breathing despair and frustration
And now as I stand before you,
I see ours is the history of unceasing poverty
running through 1000 years and more

The focus is on poverty ugly, ruthless, unrelenting The physical look of hunger and poverty, as the film shows, is the same It is the mind that changes from cold acceptance, to indifference, to callousness, to a kind of cynicism and anger The film then moves to 1971 The scene is a posh hotel With sharp counterpoint, the film catches men and women from diverse walks of life, all highly placed in Society Do they react to this poverty ? They claim they do ! There follows a sequence where the privileged class expose their hollow hyprocrisy At a climactic height, when stupidity and frivolity run riot, the lights go off Confusion reigns ! The young man appears once more, as one who has travelled a thousand years and has been assassinated

When Mrinal Sen was asked if he believed in some kind of relevance, some social commitment in films, he replied, "It is not enough to my mind to be just realistic The point is to give it direction, which means one needs to develop a partisan attitude as one gets to the analysis of reality This of course calls for commitment, political and social" Thus he chooses a cruel story, perhaps the cruellest of all Prem Chand's stories, called "Kafan", to be the basis of his film "Oka Oorie Katha" (A Village Story), made in Telegu It is a story of bitter protest against the monstrous Society where blood sucking is an ugly fact of reality

While on location in Andhra Pradesh, Sen met Krishnamurthy who became his friend, philosopher and guide Tall, dark and fascinatingly youthful, Krishnamurthy had spent 40 years as a whole time organiser and political activist, a consistent fighter for the party, living in the hills and jungles When told what sort of film Sen had in mind, Krishnamurthy took them immediately to a village which offered them all they needed — typical Kafan characters Here were the same stories of savage exploitation, the same miseries, the same bitterness, the same cold acceptance As they left the village, Sen and Krishnamurthy passed a gang of labourers, men and women, building a road Sen stood and watched, caught by the rhythmic unison and grace of their hard manual labour Krishnamurthy then pointed out that some of the women were carrying babies on their back, tied into a sling.

During the Nizam's rule, working mothers on road building and construction sites would leave their new-born babies in a shelter close-by, while they toiled in the burning sun. However, the babies had to be periodically fed and so they had to press their breasts and publicly demonstrate that milk was abundant in their breasts — only to prove that they did not lie. And it was with such a scene that Sen began his film "Oka Oorie Katha".[2]

Such a judicious and clever selection of incidents, when brought to life on the screen, does more to create indignation than any number of printed words and statistics, however clear and eloquent. It is to the credit of Mrinal Sen that as an artistic creator he is aware that his medium "has the rare quality of being ever expansive to accommodate diverse ideas". It is his capacity to project an attitude strongly, while portraying the diverse elements of reality, which raises his films from mere propaganda to artistic creations.

Shyam Benegal: Not a Didactic Film-Maker

Recently, at the end of 1981, Shyam Benegal was assisted by the West Bengal Government to make a film on sharecroppers in the State. The story which is based on a true incident uncovered by the National Labour Institute, as part of a research programme on land reforms, is about Indra Lohar, the sharecropper, who goes to the Supreme Court to fight for his rights.

What is Benegal's basic motivation in making such a film? Social concern for the oppressed and downtrodden?[3]

When asked these questions Bengal replied that basically he wanted to tell a story within a specific social milieu. He said "Frankly, I am not a didactic film-maker, but while dealing with certain social problems, or with specific social mores, there is bound to be an element of didactism." Thus his film "Manthan" (The Churning of Ideas), was commissioned by 500,000 farmers of Gujarat who wanted Benegal to tell the story of how their Gujarat Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation began. The film shows how village society has been structured by the higher castes to their benefit. The rich milk contractor exploits the villagers with the help of the Sarpanch who has crude political motivations.

Dr Manohar Rao, a veterinarian, with single-minded zeal wants to form a co-operative to help the illiterate villagers. He meets with non-cooperation and suspicion. But when they realise that he will

2. Mrinal Sen, *Views on Cinema*
3. *The Daily*, 23-10-1981.

pay them for their milk according to its fat content, they slowly begin to see that he genuinely intends to help them. Then he introduces to them the idea of offering loans at minimal interest through the co-operative to buy milch cattle, or to meet any other needs. They now have another alternative to the milk contractor who gives loans at a crippling interest Of course, the milk contractor and sarpanch do not stand by helplessly and see their spheres of influence intruded upon. Retaliation is swift, and culminates in a bonfire of the rebel village Police and government officials support them by looking the other way However, the closing shots show Bhola, one of the villagers, re-opening the Sisotie (co-operative). Dr Rao's work has borne fruit and one more community has found the path to liberation Benegal shows how those who possess power are ruthless with those who challenge them Official authority is often hand in glove with the local bigwigs However, once the peasants have been animated to fight for their rights and mobilise themselves those with power must give way

Films with Political Ideology

George A Huaco in his book, *The Sociology of Film Art*, says

> Under given socio-historical pre-conditions, a stylistically unified wave of film art charged with a certain political ideology appears and lasts as long as these pre-conditions endure The conditions for the emergence and duration of such a film wave are located in the prevailing political atmosphere and the artistic traditions of the society in question The wave requires a coherent group of directors and actors, the machinery and plant needed for film production, a political climate which inspires the wave of films and an organisation of the film industry which is sympathetic to the political ideology of the time

We can analyse films made in Kerala and Tamil Nadu between 1949 and 1977, using this model My information on the DMK films has been substantially borrowed from a paper on the subject by Karthigesu Sivalthamby[4] In Kerala, during this period, we witness the growth of the Communist Party which led to several changes in the social and political structures, to bring about equality between social classes and a more equitable distribution of the wealth generated by the labourers' toil Ultimately, the people showed their complete lack of confidence in the Congress Party, by voting the Communists into power.

In Tamil Nadu, we see the rise of the DMK (Dravida Munnetra Kazhakam) led by Annadurai and Karunanidhi, who wished to propa-

4. Karthigesu SIVALTHAMBY, *The Tamil Film as a Medium of Political Communication*, New Century Book House Pvt Ltd.

gate a political ideology which put social justice foremost on its programme of action. They consciously used the film to do this and succeeded in eventually being elected to form a DMK government in 1958

Exploitation in Kerala

Between 1949 and 1952, the Communist Party was building itself up in Kerala where it found fertile soil to grow. The rate of literacy is one of the highest in the whole of India. The feudal structure was also firmly entrenched. There were very few industries Agriculture was the main form of earning one's livelihood and the land was owned by a few very rich people. It was worked by the peasants who toiled with blood and sweat, but received barely enough to keep body and soul together Generation after generation were worked to the bone, with no hope of change, till Communist Party activists began to make them see that their salvation lay in their own hands They must change this exploitative pattern.

Film Aesthetics Linked to Politico-Economic Change

To preach their message of change the CPI (M) had a Cultural Committee which often put up plays throughout the countryside The dramatists, directors, actors and actresses were themselves inspired by Communist ideology Soon they saw the wonderful potential of the film industry to make their message known There was a ready-made group of film-makers to provide visual images which would make their ideas dynamic Many of the plays were used as scripts for films which aimed at radically changing the structure of society, establishing the dignity of the human person, fighting for the idea 'The land to the tiller' and for an equitable wage system Thus the content of the film and its aesthetics was linked with a political ideology and an economic programme of action Often particular films became tremendously popular, not only because the story was movingly true to life, but because favourite film stars created roles with which the audience could identify. Since the film has always been a popular medium, it reached out to millions — the educated, the semi-literate and illiterate

Films of Political Propaganda

One of the most popular dramatists who was himself a member of the cultural wing of the CPI(M) is Thoppil Basi His plays were acted throughout the countryside and later became the film scripts of equally popular films. Thoppil Basi describes his own experience of injustice and poverty. The remedy he discovered was the theme of

the film "Why I Became A Communist". Another popular film on the Naxalite movement, directed by K. A. Backer, used Basi's script called "Kbaninadi Chuvannappol" (When the River Kbani Ran Red) The film "Mooladhannam" (Capital) deals with the period of growth of the Communist Party, 1949-1952. It depicts how the party in power used every dirty trick in order to remain in power The title of the film "*Punnapravayalar*" combines the names of two places in Allepey district which were centres of the Naxalite movement. It openly propagates Communist ideology, but was somehow able to get past the censors One of the songs, titled "Let this Red Flag Fly", became a hit. The censors suggested it could remain as long as "Red" was changed to "Golden"!

Films of Oppression

Being leftist, many other directors were sensitised to the oppression suffered by different groups of workers in Kerala These directors began to write their scripts around these workers, to tell their stories of pain, deprivation and injustice Thus I. V Sasi made the film "Angadi", about the head-load workers of Calicut, which became very popular because it had a star cast of the late Jayan, Seema, Sukumaran, Nandita Bose and Jose It highlighted the gross injustice of meagre wages for gruelling work which broke body and soul "*Malika Paniyunnavar*", directed by Shree Kumaran Thampi, focussed on the plight of construction workers, who build homes for others but have no roof over their own heads "Nellu", another very popular film directed by Ramu Kariattu, dealt with the poor paddy workers in the rice growing district of North Kerala They were less educated than people in other parts of Kerala and therefore more open to exploitation "Valarthu Mrigangal", made by Hariharan, had its script based on a short story by the popular writer M T Vasodevan Nair It is about the sad life of circus artists, who are not only poorly paid by the circus owners but who have no provision made for them in case of accidents to which they are liable, sickness or old age

A more subtle aspect to the oppression of the poor was revealed by M T. Vasudevan in one of his short stories, which became the script for a film directed by Prem Nazir, called "Asuravithu" It shows wealthy Muslims and Hindus deliberately engineering communal clashes and riots between the working classes so that they might be divided A film which seemed to clinch the total view of the life of the people depicted in the above films was "Thirulu Bharam" (the Scale of Justice), directed by A. Vincent, the theme being that the scales of justice are always weighted in favour of the rich, the privileged and the powerful.

DMK's Programme of Social Justice

The DMK (Dravida Munnetra Kazhakam) was formally launched on 15-9-1949, in order to rid Tamil Society of its oppressive characteristics Annadurai who gave the party its ideology had an M A degree in History and Economics from the University of Madras This enabled him to make perceptive comments on the social system and freedom Karunanidhi was its propagandist par excellence In the latter's films one misses the complexity of character one sees in Annadurai but each of his protagonists are the advocates of the DMK ideology It is true that Karunanidhi's characters lack depth, but it was their outspokenness that brought forth the philosophy of the party in a direct and effective manner In the first phase of the DMK films Annadurai and Karunanidhi exposed the reasons for social oppression In the second phase the DMK actor M G Ramchandran showed how the poor man can break through social barriers Thus MGR played a powerful wish-fulfilment role, which explains why a high percentage of his fans identify him as one who acts rather than one who merely thinks and talks It is interesting also to note that Annadurai, Karunanidhi and M G Ramachandran have been elected as Chief Minister in Tamilnadu during the last twenty years

From Theatre to Film

The DMK first presented their party's programme through plays and later, realising the power of the film for social and political propaganda, they turned the plays into film scripts Thus Velaikkara (1949) and Or Iravu (1951) were popular plays, before they became box office films So too with Parasakty (1952), an epoch-making film by Karunanidhi which very forcefully put forward the DMK view on social oppression When these plays were made into films, they became powerful tools to animate the masses Thus both Velaikkara and Parasakty showed that neither the rule of law nor the blessings of the gods are for the poor The land-owners and priests manipulated the entire system to keep themselves in power and authority

The emergence of this socio-psychological attitude is well reflected in the findings of the survey done by the Centre for Social Research Madras in 1972

I WHY DOES ONE SEE A FILM?

	Urban	*Rural*
To be entertained	84%	80%
To be educated	21%	35%
To escape from boredom	28%	36%

II. WHAT INFLUENCE DO FILMS HAVE ON PEOPLE?

	Urban	Rural
Create social awareness	47%	51%
Discontent	15%	13%
Educative	22%	34%

III PURPOSE OF CINEMA

	Urban	Rural
To entertain	60%	78%
To educate national consciousness	18%	24%
To provide moral instruction	27%	35%
To create progressive social awareness	34%	27%

It is quite clear from the above statistics that the Tamil film plays an educative role, especially in creating a social and moral awareness

Conclusion

The theme of social justice is being presented in a well-thought out, artistic manner in Indian films. For want of space, I am unable to refer to some recent outstanding examples of cinematic art, on the theme of social justice made in Kannada and Marathi In such films, the camera probes the inner life and motives not only of those who are exploited, but of the naked aggression, cunning and ruthlessness, of those who respect no human right, who grab as much as they can, who violate every moral law.

Some questions come to mind which I would like to ask. In India 70% of the people are illiterate and only 30% are literate Would the same kind of film on social justice appeal to and conscientize the illiterate as well as the literate ? In urban areas, the mass of people want to be entertained with films that are a senseless and ugly conglomeration of everything ? How many of these people are interested in themes of social justice, even those which pertain to themselves ? What sort of film on social justice appeals to the educated ? A film which presents its message clearly, or one which combines message with aesthetics ?

Given the fact that the impact of film lies in its immediate appeal to the senses and its high suggestive power, too little use is being made of it in formal education Films on social justice must be used more often in schools, colleges, and parishes to educate people on the level of injustice in our country They can then be animated to act according to their capacity to change exploitative patterns in society.

Wanted: New Priests for North India

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

THE Consultation on Priestly Formation in North India which took place from February 23rd to March 1st was surely an important event in the life of the Church in these regions Possibly some, or many, of the participants may question this assessment, there was a certain sense of disappointment at the end of the Consultation, a feeling that little if anything had been accomplished We shall presently analyse the basis for this frustration. The "results" may truly appear meagre, but I still think that the meeting was very significant.

The Experience

The Consultation fell short of being an ecclesial event in the full sense of the word Restricted in scope, it had among its 115 participants (apart from the 10 staff members) 32 bishops, 79 priests and 4 sisters, but no representatives of the lay people. The great absentees were the Seminarians, especially regretted in a Consultation aiming largely at Seminary formation. However, both laity and seminarians had been associated in the preparation of the Consultation, and the result of their participation was available to the members of the meeting.

Yet in spite of its imperfect representative nature, the gathering meant for many of us the discovery of the Church in the Hindi-speaking areas of North India, which comes largely under the purview of the CBCI Regional Councils of Uttar Pradesh, Northern, Central and Eastern Regions Although the Church is in these areas a numerically insignificant minority within a huge population concentration of over three hundred million people, the participants were conscious of its having a specific task at the service of the Gospel One could sense in the meeting a strong awareness of "mission" and a firm commitment to a call as yet dimly understood One could also perceive the rich resources in personnel, hailing from very varied backgrounds, on which the Church in North India can count, and the high degree of mutual acceptance among them, specially remarkable between bishops and theologians. Here was a group that wanted to respond to the demands of the Gospel in a given situation and that was aware of the need to strike new paths, even if the direction they should take was

not clear. There was no sense of fear, no desire to "lie low" as a reaction to the revivalist self-affirmation and even aggressiveness of other religious groups in the North We knew at the meeting that just recently a bishop from the North-Eastern region had been badly manhandled; but this was taken in the stride without raising any kind of panic

If there is a wealth of personnel resources in North India it is also true that, except for the tribal belt, it consists of people who by and large are strangers to the place in regard to language and even culture Most of us are "sent" here by other Churches, from the South or from abroad, to be witnesses of the Gospel An urgent plea was therefore made to intensify the recruitment of local vocations In this recuitment the cultural and other values that the future ministers and religious will bring with them should be duly considered, the fulfilment of other standards, perhaps imported here from a different cultural situation, does not suffice

If personnel-wise the Church seems to be rather prosperous in North India with the limitations mentioned, in other resources it is rather indigent A display made at the Consultation of all the Christian books available in Hindi numbered a few hundred titles But many of them are old, 'out of stock' publications, and most of the others are in the category of popular or devotional literature There exists in Hindi very little serious literature on Christianity and almost none addressed to believers of other religions or to unbelievers Theologically we remain quite inarticulate — an important awareness in a meeting largely attended by Seminary professors and bishops It was also interesting to see on display a number of cassettes of Indian Christian religious music at present available with various agencies, and the outstanding performance of Fr Barboza SVD presenting the Bible story through classical Indian dance (*Bharat-Natyam*) opened vistas for possible growth in new areas

The most encouraging aspect of the Varanasi experience was, for me, the daily morning liturgy and the evening hour of adoration. They were inspiring because there we became aware of the deepest source of the Church's ministry in the North, the Lord present among us, and of the highest mission of the Church here, to be contemplative of the glory of God It was also encouraging to be at prayer together, because the will to inculturation and a certain advance done in this line were evident in all the services. both the eucharist and the office were exclusively celebrated in Hindi, the bhajans and hymns were largely Indian, the posture of the community, with all the participants sitting on the carpeted floor around the alter, expressed a community

conscious of the Lord's command to abolish all distinctions of rank or honour among us and to become incarnate in the culture to which we belong by vocation.

The Problem

The basic problem that gave rise to this meeting was an uneasiness felt by both the bishops and the seminary staff of the Hindi region. The formation given in our seminaries does not prepare the future priests properly for their task at the service of the Gospel in North India. The formation being mostly designed to form the traditional 'parish priest', the old chaplains of railway colonies, it is often difficult for new — and older — priests to find their place in a situation where there is no or almost no Christian community to lead or animate. What is at stake is the theological definition of the priest in this concrete sociological situation Of course there are many variants of the priestly function, even in North India Whereas in the tribal belt the priest acts essentially as a pastor and an evangelist, in the vast non-tribal areas, with their complex social and religious tensions, the priest may often be a lonely figure, sent out by the Christian Church to witness to the values of the Gospel in a very pluralistic and dialogal situation His role as "leader" of a community will have to be interpreted in a very different way from the case of a well established Christian society In what exactly does *his* priesthood consist ?

Thus the problem of formation in Seminaries leads to the problem of the priesthood in the New Testament, and its exercise in areas like those in much of North India This in turn demands a reflection on the 'mission' and task which the Church is called to fulfil here The Consultation was therefore facing a serious theological and pastoral problem Many felt that it failed to tackle it at any depth

It was not that the meeting had not been well prepared This was the seventh important meeting since, after the CBCI opted in Ranchi 1979 for regional seminary zones, the need for a thorough study of priestly formation was first expressed In their meeting in Patna in March 1980 the bishops of the Hindi-speaking area passed the following resolution

> The bishops of the Hindi Region fully support the desire of their seminary Rectors to make a serious and systematic study of seminary formation in this region in all its aspects, especially as regards the formation of priests for the pioneering work of evangelisation in the missionary context of North India, including the study of any new set-up required.

Under the leadership of Bishop Patrick D'Souza of Varanasi and of Fr D. Bhatt of Allahabad Seminary much work of consultation from

rectors, staff, seminarians, sisters and lay people followed on that resolution; the outcome of all this was a 50-page booklet, *Agenda Consultation of Priestly Formation in North India*, made available to all the participants of the meeting.

Why, then, did the Consultation fail to meet the expectations of many? What went wrong? Perhaps the basic reason for its failure is that the meeting was asked to be eminently practical, to set itself to the task of making new resolutions regarding Seminary training, while the real problem was primarily theological and pastoral; it was the question of the mission of the Church in North India. True, the Agenda booklet contains an impressive Part One on "The Present Religio-Social Situation and the Church" and "The Priest in the Mission of the Church of North India" (pp 12-27) But these pages were not sufficiently digested by the participants, nor did they fully integrate the theological principles derived largely from Vatican II and *Evangelii Nuntiandi* with the social and religious realities prevailing in the region This point should have been the primary object of the work of the Consultation It remains a work to be done This was clearly perceived by the Consultation itself which voted a last resolution saying

> The fact of religious pluralism, the growing self-awareness of the men of other faiths, their attitudes and their new readiness to work with us on the one hand, and the seminarians' deeper understanding of Christianity and its mission on the other, continuously invite us to rethink the role of religion in general and of the Christian mission in North India in particular
>
> Moreover, specially in today's emerging consciousness there can be no religion without a commitment to justice for all This demand of the kingdom is affecting to a large extent the seminarians' life and thought
>
> Though these basic problems could not be deeply and sufficiently discussed at this Consultation, still we have to come to grips with them if seminary formation is to be meaningful in our context
>
> In this way, this Consultation has brought to the fore a deeper awareness of the need to study the scope and method of evangelization in the context of North India.
>
> We recommend that these problems be studied so that priestly formation be made more relevant, as our seminarians must receive the right orientation from the Church's teaching in this important matter

One can hope that the group or organ that will make an in-depth study of this problem will include, together with other experts, both pastors and theologians Neither of these two groups can alone come to grips with the issues at stake certainly not the theologians alone, who often have no direct experience of the reality of life and of the Christian presence in North India, nor the pastors by themselves, who may be caught in the narrow grooves of ecclesiastical activities and

fail to re-think the whole situation afresh or to grasp the potentialities of the situation and the full meaning of the Christian presence in the world Each group needs to be complemented by the other It will be a pity if, having come to an awareness of the problems involved in our call, the Church in the North fails to face the challenge boldly. Its orientation, moreover, will also be important for the Church in other regions in India and elsewhere. But, who will take the initiative in this matter ?

The Resolutions

It would be wrong to think that no concrete decisions came out of the meeting Apart from the resolution already quoted at length, the Consultation did vote on some concrete steps in priestly formation which, if truly implemented, will hopefully open the way to a more meaningful priestly presence.[1] These resolutions came out from the workshop discussions but were approved by the house.

Most significant was perhaps the one affirming that the regional language — Hindi in our concrete case —" must be increasingly used as the medium of instruction in our seminaries Therefore, all students admitted to the major seminaries must have proficiency in Hindi and its literature before they begin their theology" The meeting also wanted Hindi to be the community and liturgical language in the Seminaries From the discussions it was clear that the thrust was toward teaching even the "sacred sciences" in Hindi The practical difficulties of this resolution did not escape the notice of the Consultation, but the goal was clear to all and fully accepted — there was a virtual unanimity on the resolution There remains to work towards its implementation

Other resolutions in various areas were

In the area of recruitment and early training Efforts to recruit local vocations should be intensified, academic qualifications should not be the only or most important criterion The early training will include one year exclusively devoted to spiritual formation. It must also provide a close familiarity with the diocese and its people. This is why as far as possible "every diocese should have its own minor seminary"

In the area of spiritual and personal growth The spirituality imparted on the seminarian should be that of a priest sent to the people;

1 One should note that all the resolutions are of the nature of recommendations The group was merely consultative, without any legislative function The resolutions will go to the Governing Boards and Staffs of the Seminaries for eventual acceptance and implementation

it should be based on prayer and the sacraments, but also on "a constant interaction with the people in North India" and a "discernment of God's action in their history" Small group living, both inside and outside the Seminary, was "strongly recommended" and the need for good spiritual direction and a diocesan coordinator for formation recognised.

In the area of intellectual life A resolution focussed on a new method of study to be evolved, based on the 'see-judge-act' method, the experience of the concrete situation would then become the starting-point for a faith-inspired philosophical and theological reflection The value of the lecture method, however, was also recognised. To foster the "new" method, in-service training of professors was requested, as well as meetings of teachers of the same subjects who would work out the practical steps for the implementation of the new method in their courses The study of the mystics and saints of India, of philosophy of religion, and an integrated indigenous philosophy were seen as important requirements in the multi-religious situation of the area Finally it was recommended, after a feasibility study will have been made, that competent "formators" live with a small group of suitable students to work out by test-teaching a more radically new integrated course and method

In the area of ministerial formation The stress was in preparing the seminarian for relating specially with the marginalised of society and the followers of other religions Pastoral ministries like "catechesis, healing, ecumenism, dialogue, proclaiming the Word, social, medical and developmental work, adult education programmes, social awareness experiences, etc " were recommended and should be done under proper guidance A request was made that throughout the academic curriculum at least one month every year be spent in intensive pastoral ministry The importance of a close contact on the part of the seminarians with their bishops and the priests of their dioceses was stressed in several workshops More self-reliance through work and a more Christian approach to economic realities in the seminarian's own life were sought in some of the resolutions

Although no special workshop was dedicated to the people engaged in formation, their problems were in fact discussed in all the workshops. Besides other resolutions mentioned above, the following recommendations emerged. a closer contact between professors and seminarians, two years' pastoral experience for all professors specialization to be done preferably in India; regular inter-seminary meetings of professors, and in-service training for them.

Concluding Reflections

Everybody in the Consultation was agreed that the Seminarians should be helped to become "men of God", the vocation of every priest But this expression can become a slogan and hide a good deal of ambiguity. What is, from a Christian angle, the right image of a "man of God"? Is he the sannyasi who renounces the world ? Is he the prophet announcing God's justice ? Is Gandhiji the right model, with his close contact with the masses and his deep involvement in their political and social struggles, all inspired with genuine religiosity and total poverty ? What kind of "men of God" should we be and desire our seminarians to become ?

The Consultation helped the Catholic Church in North India to become more conscious of the mission it has received from the Lord Unfortunately the ecumenical dimension was absent from it. The expression "The Church in North India" was often used, yet never was it taken into account that there exists a "Church of North India", besides the Methodist Church and other ecclesial bodies also working in the same area, often in very close contact with the people They too have received the mission from Christ Some of them have taken impressive steps towards greater self-reliance and a closer identification with the people. They have Hindi-teaching seminaries since many years, and their recruitment is largely from the area There is much which we can learn from them It is to be hoped that the Catholic Church in the Hindi region may establish closer contacts with the other Churches in the area and that we all may advance in our understanding of the mission received from the same Lord

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Continued from p 305

The openings made by the Synod *Propositions* have not been buried The Pope has said that he would entrust the text of the *Propositions* to the Pontifical Council for the Family "with instruction to study it so as to bring out every aspect of its rich content" The study will obviously have to be conducted in the light of episcopal interventions during the Synod itself The laity are fairly well represented in the Council But the voice of others too will have to be heard The Synod document as well as the Apostolic Constitution have invited the theologians to deepen the traditional doctrine. Such a process will inevitably lead to further developments On the whole, then, the outcome of the Synod can be judged to be positive.

George V LOBO, S.J.

Document

The Christian Family in the Modern World

Background

Never since the encyclical *Casti Connubii* of Pius XI in 1930 has such an elaborate document on Marriage and the Family been issued as the Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* of 22 November 1981 It comes as the fruit of the 1980 Synod of Bishops The Third Synod of Bishops in 1971 had been able to issue a major document on the theme of "Justice in the World". But at the next Synod on Evangelisation (1974), due to some procedural difficulties, the bishops were unable to bring out conclusions So, while publishing a brief, rather hastily prepared Message, they entrusted the fruits of their deliberations to the Pope who used them to prepare the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975) This seems to have set a precedent, for the following Synod on Catechetics (1977) followed the same procedure, thus leading to the Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae* (1979)

The latest Synod on the Family did not even consider the possibility of preparing an extended document The bishops were content to issue a brief message and presented a long list of *Propositions* to be considered by the Pope[1] The principle of collegiality is less evident in such a procedure, although one might argue that the time lag between the Synod and the publication of the papal document permits a more leisurely reworking of the matter On the whole the Apostolic Exhortation follows the trend of the Synodal Propositions, although here and there we see some hardening of positions. During the Synod itself many bishops seem to have been overzealous in quoting papal statements This is rather strange since the whole exercise was to advise the Pope and to provide an opportunity for representatives of the world episcopate to contribute its role to the collegial functioning of hierarchical authority

The preparation for the Synod was largely guided by a Working Paper sent out to all the bishops of the world by the central preparatory commission This formed more or less the basis for study and reflection in different countries The involvement of the faithful marked some advancement on previous occasions as can be judged, for instance, by the 60,000 replies received by the French hierarchy to the questionnaire sent out to all the parishes of the country The Indian bishops invited suggestions from many quarters and conducted a preliminary meeting largely attended by married couples and animators of the family apostolate The lay invitees to the Synod itself

1 These Propositions number 43 They have been published in three instalments in *The Tablet* 1981, pp 116-118, 141-142, 164-167.

were clearly handpicked on the basis of their opinions and scarcely represented the variety of opinions and experiences in the Church, not to talk of theological or sociological competence

If one were to go only by the texts of the Synodal 'Propositions' or of the Apostolic Exhortation, one might find little specifically new or exciting. But going through the interventions of the bishops and comparing the papal document with the 'Propositions' would yield some interesting results The interventions show that most of the bishops were aware of the many acute problems of families. They also manifest the desire of dealing with them in a positive and pastoral way There was a consensus on a more positive approach to sexuality as something good since it is a gift of God, and not simply a subject of constant warning lest it be misused The bishops as well as the Pope strongly emphasize the need for a sane sex education and marriage preparation They are one in the need for adopting a sympathetic attitude to people in trouble or to those who are unable immediately to put into practice the norms proclaimed by the teaching authority of the Church.

Those who expected a definite change in the Church stand on issues like contraception and divorce were perhaps naïve But one could have hoped that the understanding and application of traditional norms would have taken into account the theological developments and experiences of recent years Even the advances made by many national hierarchies after *Humanae Vitae* have not been integrated Strangely, the bishops from countries that took advanced positions during Vatican II and after *Humanae Vitae* seemed to have taken a back seat during the Synod The bishops of the Third World were on the whole too timid Those from Anglo-Saxon countries did provide some moments of suspense, but their proposals were largely submerged by the desire of the general body not to provide any ground for misunderstanding Thus the intervention of Archbishop John R Quinn of San Francisco caused considerable excitement According to the Archbishop himself it was considerably misunderstood by the Associated Press as an open challenge to the traditional teaching of the Church on contraception

Today any meeting has to be conducted in total secrecy or is open to sensationalism and misrepresentation from the mass media This inhibits not only debate but also nuanced change Hence the mass media, in spite of their potential for good, actually tend to be largely a negative factor in true communication The solution seems to be in greater consumer resistance to the elements that manipulate news and the statements of responsible people Actually many a Synod Father lamented that married people are strongly influenced by the media to abandon traditional values like fidelity

Role of the Laity in Evangelical Discernment

Archbishop Quinn reaffirmed his own acceptance of *Humanae Vitae*, but called for a dialogue with those who deviated from its teaching. According to a study he cited, in the United States, nearly

94% of Catholic women are using methods of family planning condemned by the encyclical and only 29% of the priests believe that contraception is intrinsically immoral.[2]

Cardinal Pericle Felici, president of the Pontifical Commission for the Revision of the Code of Canon Law, defended the traditional teaching, obliquely adding that bishops should not depend merely on statistics nor should they sow seeds of confusion According to the Cardinal, statistics do not determine morality This is perfectly true but the question is whether statistics may not call for a reexamination of a long established stand

In any case, the exchange led to reflection on the role of the laity in dealing with marriage problems Cardinal George Hume, Archbishop of Westminster, for instance, pointed out that married people should be listened to, when marriage-related issues are concerned, because they are the true ministers of the sacrament and they alone have experienced the effects of the sacrament He said,

> This prophetic mission of the family, and so husbands and wives, is based upon their experience as married persons and on an understanding of the sacrament of marriage, of which they can speak with their own authority This experience and this understanding constitutes, I would suggest, an authentic *fons theologica* from which we, the pastors, and indeed the whole Church can draw [3]

The Synodal document refers to the text of Vatican II where it is said that Christ fulfils his prophetic role not only by the hierarchy but "also by the laity whom he established as witnesses and provides with the appreciation of the faith (*sensus fidei*) and the grace of the word so that the power of the Gospel may shine out in daily family and social life "[4] It goes on to say

> The development of faith takes place only in the whole Church In family matters, it flows from those Christian families in which the sacrament of marriage is realised and revealed as an experience of faith The hierarchy's task is to cultivate this appreciation (*sensus*) and interpret it authentically [5]

On the other hand, the Synodal Fathers note that "the Church is not subject to majority rule Christ's disciples seek truth, not number Conscience, not power, moves them " However, they further add:

> Although the appreciation of the faith (*sensus fidei*) is not the result of opinion polls or statistics, the Church does recognise the importance these methods have in a better investigation of the truth, in setting up a right course of pastoral action, in exploring the signs of the times [6]

The Apostolic Exhortation proclaims the same truth. While pointing out that the "supernatural consensus of faith . .does not

2 Cf the full text of this important intervention in *Catholic Mind*, February 1981, pp 25-34

3 See *The Tablet* 1980, p 978

4 *Lumen Gentium*, n 35

5. Proposition 4

6. Proposition 2

consist solely or necessarily in the consensus of the faithful", it also declares:

> This discernment is accomplished through the sense of faith, which is a gift that the Spirit gives to all the faithful, and is therefore the work of the whole Church according to the diversity of the various gifts and charisms that, together with and according to the responsibility proper to each one, work together for a more profound understanding and activation of the word of God (n 5)

This will have to be taken seriously in understanding past documents of the Church and in the ongoing reflection on the Christian doctrine regarding marriage and the family.

Situation of the Family in the Church Today

The Latin American, African and North American bishops had noted that the marital problems arise from socio-economic problems The Apostolic Exhortation too remarks that the lack of minimum means necessary for survival, on the one hand, and excessive prosperity on the other, lead to anguish and uncertainty about the future, or deprive married people of the generosity and courage needed for raising up new human life (n 6)

A more lively awareness of personal freedom and interpersonal relationships goes together with a disturbing degradation of fundamental values, manifested in excessive individualism The pressure coming from the mass media makes it difficult to appreciate the values of total marital fidelity Scientific and technological advancement must go together with a new humanism and wisdom that can harness modern progress in the interests of the human person (n, 6)

The struggle against the unjust structures affecting family life calls for a continuous permanent conversion "which, while requiring an interior detachment from every evil and an adherence to good in its fulness, is brought about concretely in steps which lead us ever forward" (n 9)

The element of 'gradualism' in Christian perfection will come up for discussion again later

Inculturation

The African bishops particularly were preoccupied with adapting Christian marriage to their ancient tradition They recounted the difficulties arising from the widespread practice of polygamy and from the progressive formation of the marital bond in their tradition.

The Synodal document has a brief exposition on this point.[7] It asks Bishops' Conferences to undertake studies that will help to create a true inculturation of the Christian faith from the theological, pastoral, liturgical and disciplinary points of view But it is strange that it goes on to ask that local Churches be granted faculties in this area when such

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7 See Proposition 18

faculties are already clearly stated in the Introduction to the New Rite of Marriage ![8]

The papal document is more forthright. It expects the whole Church to be enriched by the process of inculturation, particularly with reference to cultures "which, though lacking technology, abound in human wisdom and are enlivened with profound human values" (n. 10)

Theology of Marriage

Several of the European bishops had pointed out that there was need for deepening the theology of marriage and sexuality The points that were included in the Synodal document are further developed in the Apostolic Exhortation (nn 11-15) Marriage is a special way of realising the fundamental vocation to love. Its specific sexual expression "is by no means something merely biological, but concerns the innermost being of the human person as such" (n 11) The norms of fidelity, indissolubility and responsible fertility flow from the sacramentality of marriage as an insertion into the mystery of Christ and the Church

Although this part of the document is full of insights, it could have been further elaborated so that the vocation of Christian marriage might receive an even firmer foundation But even as it is, it should serve as valuable material for preaching and instruction on marriage Of late there has perhaps been too much moralising and psychologising in the Church Unless the vision of Christian marriage shines bright and powerful, it would be vain to expect that Christian couples will be able to face effectively the challenge of the times

General Moral Principles

The Synodal discussions and the ensuing document reveal a lack of depth in moral reflection Time-worn expressions like 'intrinsically evil' have been thrown about without sufficient awareness of the enormous advances in current moral theology. Only a few bishops have paid attention to this point Archbishop Godfried Danneels of Malines-Bruxelles lamented that the presentation of conjugal morality has been too often cut off from its doctrinal and spiritual roots.[9]

Bishop Hubert Ernst of Breda pointed out that, since Church teaching on marriage ethics appeals to natural law, there is need for studying more deeply the limits of human intervention in the biological processes[10] He suggested that the Magisterium should inculcate basic moral values regarding marriage, like in social matters, and be more reserved regarding concrete applications.[11] The Church should encourage couples to exercise Christian responsibility in the implementation of these values.

The only point that received much attention was the 'principle of gradualism' The Synodal document, echoing the sentiments of a

8 See *Rite of Marriage*, Introduction, nn 12, 16, 17, 18
9 See *Documentation Catholique* 1980, p 1003
10. *Documentation Catholique* 1980, p 1005.
11. Ibid.

number of interventions, referred to it especially in the matter of 'openness to life'. The Apostolic Exhortation also speaks of the dynamic process "which advances gradually with the progressive integration of the gifts of God and the demands of his definitive and absolute love in the entire personal and social life of man" (n 9).

But the Pope condemns any slackness in the name of gradualism. The law cannot be "merely an ideal to be achieved in the future". It is a command "to overcome difficulties with constancy". He repeats the warning given at the close of the Synod.

> What is known as 'the law of gradualism' or step-by-step advance cannot be identified with 'gradualism of the law', as if there were different degrees or forms of precept in God's law for different individuals and situations (n. 34).

This peremptory statement at first looks like the rejection of moral pedagogy. It would be sad if it were taken to be so It would be a regression to the traditional moral rigidity The moral law would become a stifling constraint The statement of the Pope could, however, be understood as a warning against reducing moral norms to mere abstract ideals towards which one is not strictly bound to tend One has, on the contrary, the obligation to so strive towards the fulfilment of the norms that one "should endeavour to establish the conditions necessary for observing them" (n 34) Implicit in this matter is the crucial and now much debated question on 'Moral Absolutes' [12]

Responsible Parenthood

The question of family planning, more especially that of the licitness of contraception expectedly drew most attention from the Synod Several bishops complained that it was diverting attention from wider issues Some initial interventions, as has been already remarked, seemed to presage some shift in the Church's stand The Indonesian bishops welcomed a reexamination of the traditional stand, while those of India were inclined to think that it was a protection against over-eager state artificial birth control programmes The voice of the Europeans in favour of a more nuanced understanding of the teaching was surprisingly weak The only intervention that implied clear dissent from *Humanae Vitae* was that of Archbishop Hurley of Durban, South Africa It was blocked out in the official press releases.[13]

In any case, the final Synodal document reaffirmed the traditional teaching, although it showed some awareness of the problems of married couples and the seriousness of the demographic problem. Instead of calling for an open study, it invited theologians to throw light on the doctrinal foundations of the doctrine. However, it laid great stress on the law of gradualism and the need for creating conditions for the achievement of periodic continence. It rightly condemned a false dichotomy between doctrine and pastoral practice Indeed, any sane pastoral practice should be doctrinally founded This can

12 Cf G Lobo, *Christian Living According to Vatican II*, 2nd edition, Bangalore, Theological Publications in India, 1982

13 See text in *The Tablet* 1980, p 1106

be done only by reexamining the whole question of moral absolutes, which the Synod document does not attempt

The Apostolic Exhortation also reaffirms the stand of *Humanae Vitae* even more firmly and warns, as we have seen, against any form of laxity in the name of gradualism It derides the anti-life mentality pervading technological society and condemns the attempt on the part of public authorities to curb the freedom of couples in deciding about children It also condemns violence in favour of contraception, as in sterilisation or abortion The Pope makes to theologians an appeal similar to that made by the Synodal document

Conservative elements in the Church may be tempted to find in the Pope's action a justification for attacking birth regulation as such But in fact the Pope calls for vigorous attempts to promote natural family planning He also wants the fostering of psychological, moral and spiritual conditions that are indispensable for understanding and living the moral values and norms implied He brings out more clearly than did *Humanae Vitae* the essential difference between contraception and natural family planning·

> Thus the innate language that expresses the total self-giving of husband and wife is overlaid, through contraception, by an objectively contradictory language, namely, that of not giving oneself totally to the other This leads not only to a positive refusal to be open to life but also to a falsification of the inner truth of conjugal love, which is called upon to give itself in personal totality
>
> When, instead, by means of recourse to periods of infertility, the couple respect the inseparable connection between the unitive and procreative meanings of human sexuality, they are acting as 'ministers' of God's plan and they 'benefit from' their sexuality according to the original dynamism of 'total self-giving without manipulation or alteration
>
> In the light of the experience of many couples and of the data provided by the different human sciences, theological reflection is able to perceive and is called to study further *the difference, both anthropological and moral*, between contraception and recourse to the rhythms of the cycle it is a difference which is much wider and deeper than is usually thought, one which involves in the final analysis two irreconcilable concepts of the human person and human sexuality The choice of the natural rhythms involves accepting the cycle of the person, that is the woman, and thereby accepting dialogue, reciprocal respect, shared responsibility and self-control In this way sexuality is respected and promoted in its truly and fully human dimension, and is never 'used' as an object' that, by breaking the personal unity of soul and body, strikes at God's creation itself at the level of the deepest interaction of nature and person (n 32)

The Pope is convinced that contraception leads to the degrading of human sexuality by falsifying the innate language of marital love If there is to be gradualism, the Pope calls upon married people "to progress unceasingly in their marital life, with the support of a serious and active desire to gain ever better knowledge of the values enshrined in and fostered by the law of God" (n. 34)

The debate on contraception is likely to go on In the meantime, there is need for a vigorous effort to promote natural family planning. At the same time, there is need to seek an enlightened and balanced solution for the cases of those couples for whom it may not yet be concretely feasible. Transcending the 'morality of law' one should reach the 'morality of value' and learn to discern in a given situation which value is more important and urgent. To put it negatively, in conflict situations, one may have to choose, however regretfully, the lesser evil[14]

Divorce and Remarriage

Many bishops, especially those of Europe and North America, drew attention to the very high incidence of marital breakdown even among Catholics One Latin American bishop remarked that the desperately poor in his country do not have the resources to support family structures While all who spoke on the subject called for a sympathetic attitude towards those in irregular situations, some went further to suggest a reconsideration of the traditional ban on their exclusion from the sacraments

Archbishop Devek Worlock of Liverpool, spakeing on behalf of the English Bishops, asked

> Is this spirit of repentance and desire of sacramental strength to be for ever frustrated? Can they be told only that they must reject their new responsibilities as a necessary condition of forgiveness and restoration to sacramental life?[15]

However, the Synod document reaffirms the teaching that a consummated marriage between Christians is indissoluble In order that this norm be realised, it insists on proper instruction and formation of engaged couples and the introduction of a betrothal ceremony so that the couples become conscious of the seriousness of their decision While wanting pastors and faithful to understand and help persons who are divorced and remarried, it reaffirms the traditional practice of not admitting them to eucharistic communion unless they are truly penitent and "seriously pledge themselves to a way of life that does not contradict the indissolubility of the sacrament of marriage" [16]

The Apostolic Exhortation repeats the same norms, except that it spells out more clearly the last one as "taking on themselves the duty to live in complete abstinence, that is by abstinence from the acts proper to married couples" (n 84)

Apparently, the door has been closed to any modification of discipline in this matter The reasons given in both documents are: a) the condition of the divorced remarried contradicts that union of love between Christ and the Church which is signified and effected by the Eucharist; b) the pastoral consideration of not allowing the faithful

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14 Cf G LOBO, *Current Problems in Medical Ethics*, 3rd edition, Allahabad, St Paul Publications, 1980

15 *Catholic Mind*, February 1981, p 19

16 Proposition 14, 4

to be led into error and confusion regarding the Church's teaching about the indissolubility of marriage.

However, it is being more and more realised now that the mystical significance of marriage can only be imperfectly realised by any couple, and the possible misunderstanding is not necessarily verified in every circumstance. Hence there seems to be still scope for discussion and pastoral prudence In fact the Synod document calls for an extensive study taking into account the practice of Eastern Christians. It is well known that the Orthodox concede even a second union in some circumstances Besides pastors are asked for the sake of truth "to exercise careful discernment of situations" They are told that

> there is in fact a difference between those who have sincerely tried to save their first marriage and have been unjustly abandoned, and those who through their own grave fault have destroyed a canonically valid marriage Finally, there are those who have entered into a second union for the sake of the children's upbringing, and who are sometimes subjectively certain in conscience that their previous and irreparably destroyed marriage had never been valid (n 84) [17]

There is a manifest contradiction in the text or a drafting problem It looks as if the discernment required from pastors was stated as a preliminary to a more flexible stand regarding the admission to the Eucharist, and at a later stage, the introduction was kept, but the consequent passage was dropped in favour of a rigid stand ! The Apostolic Exhortation seems to have just taken over the formulation of the Synod document

The Church, of course, has the prophetic mission of emphatically proclaiming the indissolubility of marriage and the pastoral mission of fostering this value, but should she not at the same time exercise evangelical discernment in admitting people to the Eucharist who are well disposed but are caught up in an inextricable conflict situation ?

Bishop Ambrose Yeddanapally of Bellary pleaded for admission to the sacraments in the case where a person was led to a first unhappy marriage, not by his will, but because of local culture, and now is in a happy and fruitful marriage [18] Though in many such cases there will be ground for annulment, yet quite often this cannot be canonically proved or, due to the complexity of the procedure, a decree of nullity remains a vain hope Such cases, the bishop thought, deserved special consideration

Marriage of Non-believing Baptised Persons

The French bishops had raised the difficulty of pastors regarding those baptised people who present themselves for marriage without apparently any degree of faith The Synodal document, while admitting that "the very request for marriage may be a sign of faith if it is made for religious reasons", interprets 'the intention of doing what the Church does', which is the minimum requirement for validity, as

17. Cf Proposition 14, I
18. *Osservatore Romano*, English edition, 13 October 1980, p 16

"at least a minimal intention of believing with the Church and its baptismal faith".[19] It also calls for a reconsideration of the principle "a valid marriage between baptised persons is always a sacrament" in the case of those who have lost the faith.

The Apostolic Exhortion does not seem to encourage such doubts and questions Only those who "reject explicitly and formally what the Church intends to do" are to be excluded from the celebration of marriage (n 68) In other cases the pastor must see the beginnings of faith in those who approach the Church for the sacrament The Pope considers that any attempt to lay down further conditions concerning the level of faith of those to be married would involve grave risks

Although the doctrinal and pastoral difficulties concerning this matter are not resolved by this peremptory stand, it is also a challenge to the pastors to use the opportunity of marriage to confirm, and when necessary awaken, the faith of people who have been the victims of a secularised culture or have been disaffected to religion because of various reasons like the behaviour of the pious

Mixed Marriages

Cardinal Jan Willebrands, Head of the Secretariat for Christian Unity, made a significant intervention regarding inter-church marriages He hoped that the Synod "will not content itself with stating the well-known difficulties involved in mixed marriages, but that it will fulfil its pastoral duty in a positive way by addressing to them an evangelical message that will give them new heart and new hope" [20] He pointed out that both parties have rights and duties regarding the religious education of their children He went on to ask "whether the time has now come to study afresh the possibility of admitting the non-Catholic partners in mixed marriages to Eucharistic Communion in the Catholic Church, obviously in individual cases and after due examination" [21] He also recalled the suggestion of the 1970 Motu Proprio, *Matrimonia Mixta*, regarding joint pastoral care of such families.

Bishop Patrick D'Souza of Varanasi spoke of the question of non-Christian rites in mixed marriages The Motu Proprio *Matrimonia Mixta* forbids a double ceremony for giving the essential marriage consent The bishop requested that for pastoral reasons a double religious ceremony be allowed for the celebration of marriage between Catholics and non-Christians, till such time as a fully integrated marriage ceremony will have been evolved, fully acceptable to both religious communities

The Synodal document called for a review of the laws on mixed marriages It asked priests to ensure that neither partner uses unnecessary force against the other's religious persuasion and called on the Catholic spouses to be mature in religion so as to be credible wit-

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19 Proposition 12
20 *Catholic Mind*, February 1981, p 46
21 Ibid, pp 47-48

nesses to the faith It admitted the ecumenical potential of inter-church marriages [22]

The Apostolic Exhortation too stresses the ecumenical importance of inter-church marriages, but in other respects it is more defensive and merely recalls the positions of earlier documents of the Holy See

Rights and Role of Women

The Apostolic Exhortation, drawing upon Synodal deliberations, has a lot to say about the inter-relationships between the members of the family They need to be such that the family truly becomes a communion and community of persons The Pope, in line with his previous declarations, underlines the equal dignity and responsibility of woman with man This he confirms by referring to the message of the Bible (n. 22)

The Pope also deals with the place of women in society As in the recent Encyclical, *Laborem Exercens*, he defends women's equal access to public functions He likewise insists "that the work of women in the home be recognised by all in its irreplaceable value" (n 23) He declares that "society must be structured in such a way that wives and mothers are *not in practice compelled* to work outside the home, and that their families can live and prosper in a dignified way even when they themselves devote their full time to their family" (ibid)

The Pope condemns offences against women's dignity and the mentality that considers the human being, particularly the woman, "not as a person but as a thing, as an object of trade, at the service of selfish interest and mere pleasure" (n 24) Such a mentality produces very bitter fruits like slavery, oppression of the weak, pornography, prostitution and various forms of discrimination He mentions discriminations that seriously harm particular categories of women, as for example, childless wives, separated and divorced women and unmarried mothers

Mission of the Christian Family

One of the strong points of the Apostolic Exhortation as of the Synodal document is the stress on the social, cultural and religious responsibility of the family which is 'the first and vital cell of society'

> The fostering of authentic and mature communion between persons within the family is the first and irreplaceable school of social life, an example and stimulus for the broader community relotionships marked by respect, justice, dialogue and love (n 43)

Wider society, on its part, should not fail in its fundamental task of respecting and fostering the family which is "a society in its own original right" Hence

> the public authorities must do everything possible to ensure that families have all those aids — economic, social, educational, political and cultural assistance — that they need in order to face all their responsibilities in a human way (n 45)

22 Proposition 19

The Apostolic Exhortation makes its own 'the charter of family rights' drawn up by the Synod (n. 46).[23]

The Christian family is "called upon to offer everyone a witness of generous and disinterested dedication to social matters, through a 'preferential option' for the poor and disadvantaged" (n 47) "As it is a 'small scale Church', it is called upon, like the 'large scale Church', to be the sign of unity for the world" (n. 48).

As a 'Church in miniature' (*Ecclesia domestica*), "the family is a living image and historical representation of the mystery of the Church" (n 49). It has

> to take its part actively in the mission of the Church in a way that is original and specific, by placing itself, in what it is and what it does as an 'intimate community of life and love', at the service of the Church and of society (n. 50).

The Apostolic Exhortation exhorts the spouses to function as *a couple*, the parents and children as *a family* — a point much stressed in the Marriage Encounter movement.

The Christian family should be a believing and evangelising community "The celebration of the sacrament of marriage is the basic moment of the faith of the couple" (n. 51). This profession of faith is to be prolonged in their daily life In the words of *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975) of Pope Paul VI, "the family, like the Church, ought to be a place where the Gospel is transmitted and from which the Gospel radiates" (n 52) Particularly today, it "has a special vocation to witness to the paschal covenant of Christ by constantly radiating the joy of love and the certainty of the hope for which it must give an account" (ibid.).

From this follows the need for proper marriage preparation and guidance, family catechesis and the realization of the place of prayer and the sacraments for the sanctification of the family

Conclusion

The Synod has certainly aroused an increased awareness of the problems of the family today, though its results may not have come up to the expectations of many The Apostolic Exhortation might seem even more disappointing if attention is focussed on one or the other point But it has many inspiring things to say. It proposes a very positive idea of marriage and sexuality. It urges couples to exercise their responsibility in the family, Church and society. It strongly emphasizes the need for adequate marriage preparation and guidance

While it continues to exclude those in irregular unions from eucharistic Communion, the Apostolic Exhortation adopts towards them an attitude that is new There is no more question of people 'living in sin' or of calling them 'public sinners'. They are to be encouraged to live a good Christian life and treated with understanding and sympathy There is, therefore, no question at all of refusing Baptism to their children as it happens sometimes even now.

Continued on p 293

23 Cf Proposition 42.

Book Reviews

Sacred Scripture

Blessing in St Paul. By Joseph THURUTHUMALY *Alwaye, Pontifical Institute of Theology and Philosophy*, 1981 Pp. vii-328 (No price given)

As the subtitle indicates, this is a study of the Greek word *eulogein* in Paul's letters. The book is divided into two parts The first part is a study of 'blessing', philologically The author studies the Hebrew word *brk* and related words in the O T and the LXX, and the two Greek words *eulogein* and *eucharistein* in the N T With this foundation the thought content of 'blessing' in the O T, Judaism and the Synoptics is studied in some details This first part forms the basis for the study of Paul

In separate chapters *eulogein* is studied in all the relevant texts in which the term or *eucharistein* occur in Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Romans and Ephesians

The work is a doctoral thesis in biblical theology presented at the Urban College in Rome It is an example of a type of exegetical method for the study of a theme But it also raises a host of questions and many points of exegesis could be discussed and disputed

Some observations may be made. As there exist concise and rich dictionary articles on the O T use of *brk*, such as the study of Scharbet in *TDOT*, the first part of the book, necessary for the thesis, could have been omitted in publication In Paul *eulogein* is not a key word, except in a text like Gal 3, 6ff In the author's discussion of some texts, 'blessing' is either overinterpreted as in 2 Cor 9, 1-10, 1 Cor 11, 33, Rom 1, 25 and 9, 5, and 1 Cor 4, 9-13, or, on the contrary, swamped in the study of the context into which *eulogein* enters The work also suffers from some obvious weaknesses. There is much repetition The way of referring to Biblical books is strange, and the whole apparatus of a thesis with transliteration of Greek words, numerous foot-notes, references to foreign language works and detailed exegesis would frighten the ordinary reader The book falls between two worlds. It is too scientific to be of value for the ordinary educated Christian, yet not of a sufficiently high standard to be published as a thesis If the author had distilled his research into a book concentrated on Paul's most important texts on 'blessing', he would have been able to share with a larger public the research done by him on a rich theme P MEAGHER, S J

The Holy Spirit

Je crois en l'Esprit Saint. Tome III Le fleuve de vie coule en Orient et en Occident By Yves M -J CONGAR, *Paris, Cerf*, 1980 Pp 356 (No price given)

We have welcomed in this periodical the first two volumes of Congar's trilogy on the Holy Spirit and have stressed their significance and timeliness at a time when we are witnessing a re-entry of the Holy Spirit into the Western theological tradition (cf VIDYAJYOTI 1980, pp 297-298) The inauguration in 1979 of the official dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches further enhances this timeliness The first two volumes were devoted, respectively, to the progressive revelation of the Holy Spirit in the economy of salvation, and to his role in the life of the Church and of the Christian With the third volume, Congar enters into the theology of the Holy Spirit, and with it into those theological questions which, partly at least, have brought about the breach between East and West

Congar treats those questions with the highest competence, based on a thorough familiarity with both traditions, but also with the open mind that would be expected from the author of *Chrétiens en dialogue* Both as regards the modality of the procession of the Holy Spirit and his role in the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist, he shows clearly the divergences between the two traditions Both have their own coherence and their own reasons But, if they differ, they need not contradict each other, rather, they should be considered as mutually complementary and enriching. Neither the Latin *Filioque* tradition of the procession of the Holy Spirit nor the Oriental posture on the eucharistic epiclesis need to remain unsurmountable obstacles to

the union of the Churches. The faith is common, as also are the sacraments, if the spiritual experiences lay different accentuations, these should make for mutual enrichment, not separation Congar himself sets the example of a Western theologian capable of drawing nourishment from the Oriental spiritual experience

The content of the book is so rich that no short review can do justice to it In the context of the traditional but still prevailing discussion on Christomonism versus Pneumatocentrism, Congar shows the potentialities for Western theology of a pneumatological Christology He stresses the role of the Spirit in the various sacraments of the Church, especially the sacraments of initiation, baptism-confirmation and the eucharistic communion He writes theological meditations on each of the three divine persons Above all, the proposals he makes for a concrete agreement between East and West on the vexed question of the *Filioque* will draw the attention of theologians and of the Churches in dialogue, they are a hopeful sign in the search for unity between East and West

J DUPUIS, S J

Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ Ecumenical Reflections on the *Filioque* Controversy Faith and Order Paper, 103 *London, SPCK/Geneva, World Council of Churches*, 1981 Pp 186 £ 6 50

La théologie du Saint Esprit dans le dialogue entre l'Orient et l'Occident. Edited by Lukas VISCHER Conseil oecuménique des Eglises Foi et Constitution, 103 *Paris, Centurion*, 1981 Pp 205 (No price given)

In 1979 the Faith and Order Standing Commission of the World Council of Churches set the seal of its approval to a report presented to it by a group of theologians from the Eastern Orthodox and various Western traditions which it had commissioned to study the *Filioque* controversy that has divided the two main branches of Christianity for centuries The point at issue is theologically central and infinitely complex it is the question of the role of the Son in the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father The *Filioque* clause, added in the West to the Nicene-Constantinopolitan profession of faith (381), proved to be a source — and has become the symbol — of the rift between the Churches of East and West which persists even today. Rightly or wrongly?, is the question which has repeatedly been asked in recent years in the wake of the ongoing ecumenical dialogue It is again being asked here

In this volume Faith and Order shares with the Churches the report of the discussion-group and publishes the papers which were read at the two Consultations which drew up the report L Vischer, the former Secretary General of Faith and Order, rightly observes in his Preface that the restoration of unity is unconceivable unless agreement is reached on this thorny problem Ideas, however, have evolved since the days when no such agreement was in view Many theologians admit today, markedly so in the West, that both traditions have their own validity and complement each other Unity of faith and the union of the Churches need not imply sacrificing either of the two dogmatic traditions To the practical question whether the Western Churches could accept to omit the *Filioque* and to return to the original form of the Constantinopolitan Creed, the Report gives a positive answer It may be noted that the Old Catholic Churches have taken a concrete step in that direction and that the Anglican Communion is seriously considering to follow suit It may further be observed that in the official address which he delivered last year on the occasion of the 16th centenary of the Council of Constantinople, Pope John Paul II quoted the Creed's article on the procession of the Spirit in its original form, without the *Filioque* clause This may be interpreted as a sign that the Roman Catholic Church too is open to the suggestion Theologians explain that the omission of the clause in the Creed would not imply the renunciation on the part of the Western Churches of their dogmatic tradition on the procession of the Spirit It is to be hoped that the Churches will study the matter in common and take joint responsibility for a decision

The communications which accompany the Report are of a high scholarly standard, while being frank, they are written in an irenical spirit and are marked with ecumenical openness The various traditions are represented as follows the Orthodox, by M A. Orphanos, B Bobrinskoy, and D. Staniloae, the Roman Catholic, by A. de Halleux and J-M Garrigues, the Reformed by D. Ritschl, A. Heron and J Moltmann, the Anglican by D Allchin, the Old Catholic by K Stalder and H. Aldenhoven. It is not possible to

review here, even rapidly, these various contributions It is enough to note through them all a sincere desire for a mutual rapprochement As one author notes, we need to remind ourselves that before the great breach between East and West the two traditions on the Holy Spirit had co-existed for centuries without contradiction, and to draw the theological conclusion implied in this fact a return to this co-existence is possible, if only the causes of the subsequent mutual estrangement, whether of a theological nature or otherwise, are overcome

J Dupuis, S J.

Basic Ecclesial Communities

The Challenge of Basic Christian Communities Edited by Sergio Torres and John Eagleson *Maryknoll, Orbis Books*, 1981 Pp xx-283 $ 9 95

Between their two World meetings thus far, Dar-es-Salaam (1976) and New Delhi (1981), the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT) have been holding one continental meeting in each of the three continents of Africa, Asia and South America The book under review publishes the proceedings of the South American meeting, held in São Paulo, Brazil, February 20-March 2, 1980

The common thrust of EATWOT notwithstanding, the continental meetings, as would be expected, reflect in their preoccupations and orientations the situation obtaining in each of the three continents Thus, while liberation praxis and theology represent the common ground, distinct emphases are nevertheless observable a stress in South America on political involvement, in Africa on culture and Africanisation, in Asia on the religious factor in a multi-religious situation Speaking of the South American meeting, it was also natural to expect that it would situate itself in relation to the Puebla Assembly of Latin American Bishops, held one year earlier (1979), even if critically in view of the compromising character of Puebla's final Document. Its weaknesses are often adverted to in the volume

As the title of the book indicates, the central theme of the meeting was "Basic Christian Communities" and the challenge they pose to the Latin American Churches for a liberation praxis. It is a known fact that the BCC's have become in those Churches, most of all perhaps in Brazil, not only forces of Christian renewal and a new Church model at the grass-roots, but also the principal factor in the political involvement of the people in their own liberation according to the demands of the Gospel

The volume, which contains the unabridged proceedings of the meeting, is divided into five parts The first, "*Christian Presence in Situations of Domination*", analyses the present situations of oppression, either of specific groups of people or in a specific country, and the response of Christian Communities to those situations Among these studies there is one on the involvement of Christians in the Nicaraguan revolution Part II presents theological reflections on Popular Christian Communities by leading South American theologians, G Gutiérrez, L Boff, J M Bonino and J Sobrino, among others This part of the book is an important contribution to the theology of the BCC's The third part includes some of the grass-roots experiences narrated at the Congress and some texts of the liturgical celebrations that were held There follow in the fourth part two documents published by the Assembly the "Final Document" and a "Letter to Christians in Popular Christian Communities in the Poor Countries and Regions of the World" The fifth part contains evaluations of the meeting by participants from Africa, Asia and North American minorities

The volume is important both because of the leading role which the South American Continent has played and continues to play in the growth of liberation movements and theology, and because of the subject treated Whatever valid questions may have to be asked, the volume is one more proof of the irruption of the Third World and its theology

J Dupuis, S J.

Priesthood and Ministry

Prêtres anciens, prêtre nouveau selon le Nouveau Testament. By Albert Vanhoye, S J *Paris, Seuil*, 1980 Pp 373 (No price given)

Priesthood and ministry in the Church have been much discussed in recent years The much spoken of "crisis of priestly identity" has perhaps abated after the 1971 Synod of Bishops, it has not, however, been solved and the questioning is going on. What supremely matters in this search for identity is that it be

derived from the right source. Much as it is influenced by sociological factors and needs to be continuously adapted to new sociological conditions, the priestly ministry does not find in those its *raison d'être* Nor can it ever be explained by reference to other models, be it that of the O T. priesthood The priestly ministry in the Church has its source in Jesus Christ

Of this the book under review is a powerful reminder It is not a book about *priests* (in the plural) in the N T , only in its final conclusion does it lead to them Rather, it is a book about Jesus Christ, the source of their identity The title, "Ancient Priests, New Priest" clearly describes its subject Vanhoye compares the ancient priesthood of Israel to the new and unique priesthood of Jesus Christ in the N T His previous studies, especially his masterful studies on the Letter to the Hebrews, equipped him well for the task He pursues his theme through the various writings of the N T , from the Gospels to the Acts, and from Hebrews to Peter, Paul and the Apocalypse Through all these writings, and specifically in Hebrews, he shows Christian faith progressively discovering the new priestly reality established in Jesus Christ Though continuity there is between the old and the new, the burden of the Letter to the Hebrews finally consists in showing the discontinuity and the total newness, to the extent that all other priesthood is abolished in Christ and that he alone can in the fullest sense be called Priest He is the Priest of mankind, the Mediator between God and man Vanhoye goes on to show in what sense, still according to the N T , Christ's unique priesthood extends collectively to the Christian Church Not all exegetes, perhaps, will agree with all the details of his exegesis of texts on the 'common priesthood', but he excels to show that no priesthood, common or ministerial, can hereafter look back for a model in the O T Its model can only be Jesus Christ himself

One may express the hope that this book may one day have a sequel Vanhoye is now well placed to show us how the priestly ministry finds its identity in relation to Christ and the Church Grateful as we are for "Ancient Priests, New Priest", may we look forward to "New Priest, New Priests"?

J DUPUIS, S J

Le Ministère dans l'Eglise. By Edward SCHILLEBEECKX. *Paris, Cerf,* 1981 Pp 211. (No price given.)

Over the last twenty-five years Schillebeeckx has contributed articles on ministry in the Church, responding step by step to the questions posed by the priestly crisis The present book is based on four, recent, such articles which have been reworked, further developed and restructured to form a unit

The chapters study in order: the history of ministry in the N T Communities, the subsequent history of the ecclesial ministry through the centuries of Christian tradition, the questions put to the traditional practice of ministry in recent years, some perspectives for the future

Schillebeeckx's fundamental contention is that ministry in the Church is essentially functional, a service in and for the community The Churches of the N T knew of different Church organizations designed to meet the needs of the communities The early post-biblical tradition, the fixation of ministry into three orders notwithstanding, remained acutely aware of the functionality of ministry in relation to the Church S points to the prohibition of "absolute ordinations" by the Council of Chalcedon, ordinations unrelated to the service of a community were considered 'not only illicit but invalid This essential relation of ministry to community was lost sight of in later tradition through the gradual 'sacerdotalisation' of ministry A return to the early concept is called for The present crisis of vocations will then appear to be a false problem Theologically it is certain that Christian communities have a right to a ministry of presidency without which they cannot exist, it seems to follow that the Church's duty to provide them with such ministers must prevail over the maintenance of canonical rules imposed by a late tradition S — like many others — advocates the restoration of a married clergy, the ordination of leaders of basic communities He proceeds further, to suggest that no valid objection can be raised against the ordination of women He does not rule out lay presidency of the community, including the eucharist, for proportionate needs, though this would suppose a certain permanency of the lay president

There is much in the book which will help the ongoing reflection on ministry, and some of its suggestions will be readily accepted by many Not all, however, as S himself anticipates in his Preface, nor will all follow him in all his interpretations In particular, the essential functionality of ministry need not be set in opposition to the permanency in

the ordained minister of a priestly character; nor need the charismatic nature of ministry be set in opposition to its origin in Christ's institution

J DUPUIS, S J

Vatican II for the Laity

The Signs of the Times. Book 16-17, Basic Course, Part I Pp 186 Rs 10 **"Unless You are Born Anew"** Book 18-19, Basic Course, Part II Pp 155 Rs 10 **"You Shall be My Witnesses"** Book 20, Basic Course, Part III Pp 126 Rs 10 *Bangalore, Movement for a Better World*

The three books under review belong to the Presence Series on Spirituality of the movement for a Better World They are the result of the courses offered on "How to Live the Council" Their reflections are put down in three separate books which are expressive of the three fundamental characteristics of every Christian's life prophecy, priesthood and service The three volumes, though complete in themselves, are interdependent and complement one another

The first book, *The Signs of the Times*, deals with the first characteristic of Christian life, that is, prophecy It proceeds in four stages First there is an attempt to discover and describe the individual characteristics of our period of history and to take up the challenge it poses to man, the Church and society The second stage is constituted by theological reflection, that is, a reading of the historical situation in the light of faith There follows an attempt to apply evangelical discernment to the reality described in the first part and enlightened in the second The fourth part considerers what commitment is required of the Church and the Christian in response to God and man It includes belonging to history, announcing God's message to our times, and working for the transformation of the world in such a way as to direct the whole of creation towards the establishment of God's kingdom

The second book, "*Unless You are Born Anew*", deals with the second characteristic, the priesthood This is seen as a vocation to a new way of living, transformed by God's action, offered to him to be used by him as a sacrament This kind of new life was incarnated in Christ and he makes it possible for us through the gift of his Spirit The first part shows how this new life opens a new horizon for us, how it enables us to live in a mystery of Communion which makes us Church In the second part there is a reflection on the fundamental structure of the new man's response to the new life faith, hope, charity, and the evangelical counsels The third part discusses how the dynamism and process of growth blend the initiative of God with the constant co-operation of man That the core of the new life is charity is dealt with in part four The concluding part describes the resurrection of Christ as our Easter, and our new life as rooted in it Though death is unavoidable, it is but a prelude to final resurrection and to an eternal future in God

The last book in the series, "*You Shall be My Witnesses*", reflects on the third characteristic of Christian life, service Every Christian is "sent", and thus the whole Church is "sent" Part I deals with this essential mission, its nature and its fundamental laws The indispensable condition of the Church's witness is that she incarnates in her life the ideal of salvation she offers to the world Part II proposes some fundamental guidelines for a pastoral option directed towards this goal True renewal of the Church must start at the level of the parish Parish life is described as a "living communion of basic ecclesial communities", these must act as a leaven for the revitalisation of the Church Part III takes us back in a more explicit manner to the "world" The Church and each individual must commit themselves to the building up of a better society, in keeping with the plan of God and the urgency of the historical moment Part IV re-expresses in a final synthesis the basic convictions of the three volumes

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J KERKETTA, S J

Education to Development

People's Participation in Development Approaches to Non-Formal Education Edited by Walter FERNANDES *New Delhi, Indian Social Institute,* 1980 Pp xxxviii-186 Rs 20

Realising that the economic growth model chosen by most planners and development workers has not benefited the poorest sections of society, many voluntary agencies have been experimenting with alternative approaches These individual experiments must not

remain unknown to others, and the individuals and groups must not be allowed to work in isolation if their pioneering efforts are to make an impact on the national scene. Their results must be made known to others and they must be helped to work together To this end, a convention of about ninety persons involved in various experiments was held at the Indian Social Institute in March 1980 The book under review presents, in revised version, a selection of papers presented at this "International Convention on People's Participation in Development" The participants were involved in practical work centred round new ways of meaningful participation of people in their own development, the factors that influence such a process, and their implications for the non-formal training of workers destined to promote it The proceedings are published in order to encourage the persons in the field, help them to reflect on their work, and make their experiences available to larger audiences all over India The book is divided into two parts the first part discusses principles that should govern development programmes if they are to lead to maximum participation of the people, the second part analyses some concrete projects and identifies the elements that led to success as well as limitations

In his keynote address Kishore Saint cautions development workers against borrowing terms and ideas from abroad without seeing their relevance to India, he then reflects on the meaning of development and participation, identifies the right type of participation, and discusses the need of an 'appropriate ideology' The next four essays in the first part are reactions to papers presented by the participants Desmond A D'Abreo discusses critically three concrete programmes, and then elucidates the meaning of awareness building and its relevance to India R S Arole reflects on community health. In his view it keeps to the short term objective of making health care accessible to the rural poor who are excluded from it by the elite that controls its delivery, for him the long term objective is change of the social system He enunciates the criteria that should guide this approach and discusses the programmes presented in the light of these principles Louis Menezes goes into the causes that deprive the poorest sections of their fundamental right to a house and tries to find a way of solving the problem by making people active agents of change J M Heredero concludes the first part saying that a major hurdle to the organisation of the poorest is their own internalisation of the exploiter's values and their consequent low self-image, lack of self-confidence and distrust of their own group. He combines behavioural sciences and community building techniques in his experiments on new approaches to education He discusses the role of technology both in the image-building process and in people's participation Any approach that diminishes either productivity or people's participation is to be excluded A new educational system that will enable the villagers to understand technology and management techniques must be developed, and the villagers must become masters of their own destiny.

In the second part S Martine explains the approach followed by the Rural Community Development Association It consists in identifying issues that can unite Harijans and the poorest sections of the upper castes together on a common platform He uses culture to educate the oppressed, following the technique which the oppressors themselves used to impose their values on the exploited C M Joseph uses the tool of formal education His objective is not literacy but something more, to help the weakest sections capture power in the villages by educating their children Anthya Madiath with her Gram Vikas programme aims at unionisation of all tribals Her health programme too has as its ultimate objective a people's movement However, she feels that one has to work within the constraints of a religious structure Valerian D'Souza explains his Veeranagar programme near Mangalore, where in a situation of a flood disaster which left the victims dependent on the benefactors, he devised tools to educate and organise the people. He argues that voluntary groups in India and funding agencies in the country and abroad, which readily come forward to help the victims of natural calamities, ought to be able to mobilise themselves and others under ordinary conditions where injustice is the rule of the day Thomas Myladoor shows how an agency that started as a charity cum relief organisation can, by keeping itself open to the voice of the people, become a facilitator of social change in a slum community The book is concluded with the statement of the Convention The statement stresses that, apart from using technical inputs as tools for education, external groups are to be only

facilitators of change and cannot be the doers No one can change the people, they have to change themselves Others can only be supportive elements It is hoped that this book will make a contribution to a debate which is of such vital importance in a country like India

J KERKETTA, S J.

Islam

Islam at a Glance Edited by Hakim Abdul HAMEED *New Delhi, Indian Institute of Islamic Studies in association with Vikas Publishing House*, 1981 Pp 109 Rs 60

On the occasion of the beginning of a new, the fifteenth century of Islam, the President of the Indian Institute of Islamic Studies at Tughluqabad together with members of its staff, wanted to offer the reader "a glimpse into the history, basic concepts and practices of Islam and the life of its Prophet" and to "present clearly and concisely the salient features of Islam" understood, above all, as a way of life

The collected essays touch indeed upon the basic aspects of Islam as an ideology and ideal Some important areas have, however, been left out, for instance, the origin and significance of the various sectarian groupings in Islam, Islamic aesthetics and the Islamic bases for a dialogue of cultures and religions in the contemporary world The essays do somehow form a balanced whole Yet, they seem to have been written independently from one another Thus there is a certain amount of repetition and a palpable clash in the individual perceptions and approaches of the authors

The essay on the Prophet Muhammad depicts him as the ideal man fully in line with the century-old devout and devotional biographies of him The succinct survey of the general history of Islam shares the same pre-critical attitude Islamic beliefs and practices, ethics, family life and economics are depicted as pure ideals to be held as a mirror before the eyes of today's Muslims struggling with the realities and complexities of modern life In all this Hadith and traditional *sira* are referred to as unimpeachable source and reference Besides, it would seem to be significant that almost all the references given in the various contributions are taken directly from the Quran and from Hadith and *sira* The *sharica*, i e., the body of Islamic Law which traditionally is believed to indicate and explicate the Islamic way of life in detail, is hardly mentioned This contrasts sharply with the writings of the *ulama* of, say, Deoband and the Nadwat ul-ulama and of those of the Jamaat-i Islami

The volume offers three original contributions worthy of close attention In "Islam and Human Rights"— no doubt a topical subject — V A Syed Muhammad juxtaposes key statements of the UN Declaration of Human Rights with selected basic teachings of the Quran and of Hadith He states a complete harmony It would be fascinating to compare this chapter with the very recently (1982) promulgated "Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights" (Islamic Council, 16 Grosvenor Crescent, London SW1) [1] One difference immediately catches the eye This Declaration frequently refers to "the authority of the Law", in other words, the authority of the *sharica* is unquestionably accepted and presupposed whereas Syed Muhammad hardly mentions "the Law"

Rasheeduddin Khan draws a realistic sketch of the social stratification of Muslim society as it lives in tension with Islam's professed egalitarian ideals On the basis of his analysis he discerns it as "the major task before the Muslim societies all over the world" "to evolve relevant social patterns that would creatively adapt the valid humanistic, positive and radical content of Islam with the challenges of building a new life in the highly interdependent world of our times Islam will have fulfilled the historic mission of Muhammad if its votaries become active participants in the great drama of bringing into being a just, human World Order, on the debris of the existing forms of oppression, inequality, domination and the dehumanized disregard of the values of life and dignity of Mankind" (p 100)

Syed Vahiduddin presents convincingly the Muslim vision of the inner life based on the teaching of the Quran He depicts the balanced togetherness in genuine Muslim spirituality of such poles as strife for individual perfection and communal participation, outer performance and inner commitment, total surrender and dynamic action Without such a vision being enacted, the lofty programme indicated by Rasheeduddin Khan would easily remain a mere idealistic concept

Christian W TROLL, S.J.

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What Is Apostolicity?

Third World Analysis of Society

The Indian Church for a New Society

AUGUST 1982

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JOURNAL OF THEOLOGICAL REFLECTI[ON]

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In This Issue

A previous issue of VIDYAJYOTI has drawn the attention of our readers to the much discussed problem of the relationships between the three individual Churches of India (see April 1981, pp 153-178). We then expressed the hope that, in searching for a solution, the three Churches may have for their paramount concern the evangelization of the country, this, we said, will require on the part of all a true conversion Last January's Tiruchirapalli CBCI Meeting approached the highly emotional question of the three rites It did not reach any conclusion but appointed a committee of bishops to further study the problem and make concrete proposals While the work is under way, we wish once again to contribute to the process of reflection Fr Felix WILFRED writes on apostolicity, a concept which needs to be correctly understood if the Church's mission is not to be distorted He shows that apostolicity in mission, witness and ministry links the Church of today with the apostolic college, not with a particular apostle He further indicates that apostolicity is not meant for the preservation of ancient human traditions, however noble, but is destined for the ongoing incarnation of the message of Christ into ever new human groups and cultures.

Two important meetings have taken place in India last year which it is not far-fetched to link together One was the Fifth EATWOT Conference, held in New Delhi last August, which has been reported at length in the February issue of VIDYAJYOTI this year. The other was the Research Seminar on "The Indian Church in the Struggle for a New Society", which took place at NBCLC, Bangalore, October 19 to 24 A report on the second meeting is presented here by way of an analysis of its Final Statement The conclusions of the two meetings offer an analysis of society, of its mechanisms and operation, at the international and world level, the presuppositions of which remain, however, open to question Fr Thomas M GANNON discusses them from the view-point of a First World sociologist whose competence no one will be inclined to deny What stands out from the discussion is that First and Third Worlds need to listen more to each other lest, turning uncritical assumptions into unassailable dogmas, they should end up in a dialogue between deaf people. This danger threatens theologians as well as sociologists; but to them we hope to return on another occasion.

Church Founded by an Apostle or on the Apostles?

Apostolicity of the Church in a New Context

Felix WILFRED

APOSTOLICITY is a subject of vital importance to the faith of the Church and the exercise of her mission. It is at the same time an issue around which many a delicate problem revolves. Approaches to questions like the present identity and continuity of the Church with its origin, the norm of faith, development of doctrine, validity of ministry and succession, depend to a great extent on how one understands and interprets apostolicity No wonder then that this theme has not only aroused great interest but also is considered a key issue in ecumenical circles

The theme of apostolicity is acquiring much rlevance in India today in the context of the discussions on the relationship between the Latin and the Oriental Churches, particularly with regard to their rights and duties in the work of evangelization in North India The question of relationship figured prominently in the CBCI meeting held in Tiruchirapalli in January 1982 [1] Three papers were presented by representatives of the three rites in India, Bishop J. Powathil, Bishop Cyril Mar Baselios and Archbishop Henry D'Souza, representing the Syro-Malabar, Syro-Malankara and Latin Churches respectively.[2] It was an issue about which many bishops of the Conference felt strongly; yet the matter was considered so delicate that there were but few interventions No practical conclusions could be arrived at in the meeting but a committee of bishops was set up to study the question in depth — a clear confirmation of the difficulties involved

In the whole discussion of this problem, the Orientals base themselves very much on the apostolic foundation of their Churches. For them, the origin of their Churches from St Thomas is not only a matter of history, but it also entitles them to a privileged position, it has, in the words of Bishop Cyril Mar Baselios, "deep theological,

1. Cf. *Report of the General Meeting of the CBCI*, Tiruchirapalli, January 4-14, CBCI Centre, New Delhi, 1982, pp. 42-44

2. The papers have been published by the CBCI Centre· *Latin-Oriental Relationships in India, Preparatory Papers for Discussion*, New Delhi, 1982.

ecclesial implications".[3] In fact, according to them, it is the Oriental Churches which have treasured all along the '*apostolic Christ-experience*'[4] and so they should be taken as "*normative, constitutive of Christian life and life of faith*"[5] when "emerging communities in India" are formed by missionary preaching. These views seem to be shared also by some theologians belonging to the Oriental rites.[6]

Hence, we are forced to reflect on the apostolicity of the Church seriously and to examine objectively the position of the Orientals. It is well known that the present discussion on the relationship between the rites covers many practical matters, such as "sharing of further territories for evangelization" and multiple jurisdiction. When pragmatic interests dominate, the tendency is to theologize on an ad hoc basis to suit one's interests, and in this process an important theme like apostolicity may be exploited as a catch-word to serve one's purpose. Hence it is all the more necessary to make clear to ourselves what we understand when we profess the article of faith: "I believe in... the apostolic Church". [7]

I *Apostolicity in the New Testament*

The adjective 'apostolic' has known in the course of centuries a wide variety of meanings and applications, some of which have little to do with the apostles [8] This development has also influenced in a considerable way the understanding of the apostolicity of the Church.

To speak of the apostolicity of the Church meaningfully, we have to refer back to the place held by the apostles in New Testament times and the role they played. But historical and exegetical studies present such different conceptions of 'apostle' that a well-defined and coherent

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3 Op cit, p 30

4 The expression recurs in the papers of Bishop Cyril Mar BASELIOS and Bishop J POWATHIL

5 Op cit, p 31

6 Cf. M. VELLANICKAL, "Individual Churches The Biblical Perspective", in *Jeevadhara*, 8 (1978), pp 274-289, X KOODAPUZHA, "The Ecclesiology of the Thomas Christians in India", *Jeevadhara* 8 (1978), pp 290-308, Id, "The Indian Church of the Thomas Christians", in *Christian Orient* 1 (1980), pp 20ff, Geevarghese CHEDIATH, "Unity versus Uniformity· An Ecumenical Question", in *Christian Orient* 1 (1980), pp 141-164, X. KOODAPUZHA, "Communion of Churches in the Indian Context", in *Jeevadhara* 7 (1977), pp 341-357

7 FELIX WILFRED, *Credo Apostolicam Ecclesiam A theological description of Apostolicity with special reference to its impact on Young Churches*, Rome, 1976 (Doctoral dissertation shortly to be published)

8 L M. DEWAILLY, "Histoire de l'adjectif 'apostolique'", in *Mélanges de science religieuse* 5 (1948), pp 141-152, H HOLSTEIN, "L'évolution du mot 'apostolique' au cours de l'histoire de l'Eglise", in *Apostolat*, Les éditions du Cerf, Paris, 1957; P. KLOSTERMANN, *Das Christliche Apostolat*, Innsbruck, 1962.

picture does not seem possible.[9] In the New Testament we find striking differences between the Lukan concept of Apostle and the Pauline concept All the same certain features of the apostles are so evident that they can hardly be denied On the basis of these we may distinguish *three levels* of meaning in speaking of the apostolicity of the Church.

In the first place, apostolicity should be considered in the light of the intimate association of the Twelve with the person and message of Jesus What is characteristic of them is that they are messengers who are *sent*, and their sending has as its object the proclamation of God's rule and Kingdom which was the central concern in the life and ministry of Jesus himself

After his death and resurrection it is Christ himself who is proclaimed by the apostles, for in him and in his life God's Kingdom has made irruption into the world That in Christ a new era has dawned, the messianic age has arrived and a new fellowship with God and men has been established — this is the Good News of salvation

Similar to the Jewish institution of '*shaliah*', the apostles were emissaries who were also *empowered*, with the result that in proclaiming they act not on their own personal authority but in the name and authority of the Lord who sent them The mission given to them during the earthly life of Jesus is not only confirmed by the Risen Christ, but it acquires a *universalistic* dimension —"to all nations" (Lk 24 47, Acts 1 8, Mt 28 16-19, Jn 20 21-23) Their mission, originally exercised within the confines of Palestine, after the resurrection extends to wider horizons Further, the mission of the apostles has a forward thrust, for it is directed to the total renewal of all things and the final gathering of all nations Jesus himself referred

9. From a large number of studies on this question, we indicate a selected few O LINTON, *Das Problem der Urkirche in der neueren Forschung*, Uppsala, 1932, E M KREDEL, "Der Apostelbegriff in der neueren Exegese", in *Zeitschrift fur Katholische Theologie* 78 (1956), pp 169-193, 257-305, J ROLOFF, *Apostolat-Verkundigung-Kirche* Ursprung, Inhalt und Funktion des kirchlichen Apostelamtes nach Paulus, Lukas und Pastoralbriefen, Gutersloh, 1965, K H RENGSTORF, *Apostolat und Predigtamt*, Stuttgart, 1954², C K BARRETT, "The apostles in and after the New Testament", in *Svensk Exegetisk Arsbok* 21 (1956), pp 30-49, L. CERFAUX, "Pour l'histoire du titre *Apostolos* dans le Nouveau Testament", in *Recherches de science religieuse* 48 (1960), pp 78-92, Hans VON CAMPENHAUSEN, "Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power", in *The Church of the First Three Centuries*, London, 1969, pp 12-29. H MOSEBECH, "Apostolos in the New Testament", in *Studia Theologica* 2 (1948), pp 166-200, W SCHMITHALS, *The Office of the Apostles in Early Church*, Nashville, 1969, G KLEIN, *Die Zwolf Apostel, Ursprung und Gehalt einer Idee*, Göttingen, 1961, B RIGAUX, "Die Zwolfin Geschichte und Kerygma", in *Der historische Jesus und der kerygmatische Christus*, edited by H RISTOW-K MATTHIAE, 1961²; J. DUPONT, "Le nom d'Apôtres a-t-il été donné aux Douze par Jésus?", in *L'Orient Syrien* 1 (1956), pp. 267-290, 425-444.

to their role in the *eschatological* period (Mt 19· 28, Lk 22· 28-30) when they would sit on the Twelve thrones.[10]

In the light of what has been outlined above, we can say that the Church is apostolic because, totally dependent on Christ like the apostles and empowered by his Spirit, she is sent into the world with a mission — to be an instrument of God's Kingdom. In the sending of the apostles by the risen Lord as heralds of the Kingdom, it is the Church in its nucleus, the new Israel represented by the Twelve which is sent into the world.

The community of believers is not only sent like the apostles, but it also is the *continuation* of the apostles in that it pursues the same mission of Jesus entrusted to them as a body As the bearer of the mission of Jesus and the apostles, the Church necessarily tends to the future — to the full blossoming of what she announces and witnesses to These missionary and eschatological dimensions are not only important elements in the apostolicity of the Church, they are also primary ones.

At a *second level*, the Church is apostolic in that her confession of faith, her teaching and service rest on the Gospel *as* transmitted by the apostles, and refer to their witness based on their direct, personal and first-hand experience of Christ As the Christ-event is *ephapax*, once and for all in history and therefore unrepeatable and unique, so too the body of apostles associated with this event of God's revelation is unique and singular.

We should specially pay attention to the fact that our faith is bound to the person of Jesus and the meaning of his life, rejection, death and resurrection *as* interpreted by the apostles We can see him only through the interpretative medium of the apostles Here lies the vital and much-discussed question of the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith Through the witness and interpretation of the apostles Jesus is for us no mere event in history but a personal reality and object of faith for all ages

The speeches of St Peter as reported in the Acts clearly show how the events of Jesus' life, particularly his passion, death and resurrection were presented as the fulfilment of Scriptures concerning the Messiah, and therefore in their salvific meaning Above all it was the resurrection of Jesus which by its nature demanded the witnessing of the apostles for as an event it surpasses all the others Peter was able to give his kerygmatic witness in the name of the Twelve "We are witnesses to all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in

10. J. Dupont, "Le Logion des douze trônes", in *Biblica* 45 (1964), pp. 355-392.

Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and made him manifest" (Acts 10: 39f).

Luke restricts these authorized witnesses to the circle of the Twelve who were qualified. Certainly there would have been in the early Church men who had known the events of Jesus' life and experienced his resurrection Paul speaks of more than five hundred brethren to whom the Lord appeared (1 Cor 15 6). The election of Matthias too clearly shows the presence of more such men, from among whom he is elected But what characterized the apostolic group was that they were witnesses *called and commissioned.* The Twelve were explicitly given charge by Jesus himself to bear witness (Lk 24 48, Acts 1.8), nay, they were his pre-ordained witnesses (Acts 10 41) Paul in his speech at Antioch of Pisidia makes reference to these witnesses of the earthly Jesus. "And for many days he appeared to those who came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people" (Acts 13 31)

Thus the apostolic interpretation of Christ, the witness and preaching of the apostles are normative, and they ought to guide the Church of every generation. This apostolic character has become part and parcel of the faith of the Church In transmitting faith, the Church transmits the faith of the apostles which permeates her being, life and expressions. In fact, with the disappearance of the apostolic group, when there arose much uncertainty, the early Church firmly stuck to the apostolic rule of faith, to the apostolic writings and genuine traditions as found in her life This, for example, happened when the Church was confronted with the gnostic crisis [11] The apostolic faith, witness and teachings are recorded faithfully above all in the New Testament, which is the sure norm and undisputable point of reference for the life of the Church and her mission

The value of whatever has been handed down — apostolic tradition, Scripture, etc — does not lie in its antiquity but in that it is a means to carry on the cause of Jesus When one exalts tradition there is the possible danger of losing sight of the missionary dynamism contained in the concept of apostolicity The Gospel of salvation proclaimed by the apostles cannot be once and for all codified, but has to be experienced in every age by the believing community and to be transmitted in a living way. What would be the use of all the

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11. Cf G G BLUM, *Tradition und Sukzession. Studien zum Normbegriff des Apostolischen von Paulus bis Irenäus*, Berlin-Bamburg, 1963, A BENOIT, "Apostolicité au IIème siècle", in *Verbum Caro* 58 (1961), pp 173-184, D VAN DEN EYNDE, *Les normes de l'enseignement chrétien dans la littérature patristique des trois premiers siècles*, Paris-Gembloux, 1933.

apostolic traditions and institutions if Christ were not transmitted and made a living reality and object of experience for the Church of today ?

This leads us to consider a *third level* of meaning In order that the Gospel may be proclaimed in a living way, uninterruptedly and authoritatively, as a message coming from God, it is necessary that the sending of the apostles be continued through ministers. In fact, the apostles not only built up communities through their work as preachers, ministers of worship, pastors and leaders, but they appointed other men to continue the same functions In this way the offices of episcopate, presbyterate and diaconate emerged which all continue the one apostolic ministry with its various functions.

The very existence of a continued apostolic ministry as a grace of God — and not a creation from below by the community on its own authority — is a testimony and a constant reminder to the Church of the fact that the Gospel is not a right of man but a free gift of God. For, though the minister is for the Church, in a certain sense he is above it or over against it and in this way, like a sign, he points to the gratuitous nature of the Gospel

The apostolic succession of the ministers is but a visible sign that the ministry of the apostles extends in the Church in vital continuity and in fidelity to the Gospel In the awareness and practice of the early Church, more than ordination, it was the faithful exercise of the mission of the apostles which was the primary thing for the ministers in the communities In other words, whether one was validly ordained was not the central issue which affected the communities, but whether one was faithful to the apostolic Gospel and ministry Therefore, in order to be a minister in a community one has to *actually* succeed the apostles in their mission and witness, and in their discipleship of Jesus, none of which can be replaced by a formal appeal to ordination, tradition and succession.

From what has been said up to now about the three levels of meaning of apostolicity, it is clear that the apostles have a *permanent significance* for the Church and that they are her *continuing foundation.* Now, this significance and foundational character have to be understood in a *collegial* sense, namely in so far as the apostles formed one group, one body or college.[12] It is in their unity as a body, with one undivided Gospel message and with the same mission, that they continue to be the foundation on which the Church is built with Christ as the cornerstone (Eph 2:20). Therefore, whenever and

12. Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, n. 22.

wherever a particular Church comes into existence as a community of believers in Christ, it is founded on *all* the apostles as a group and not on any single apostle.

This group-character of the apostles is very evident in the New Testament It is significant that the list of the Twelve is given four times (Mk 3. 16, Mt 10 2, Lk 6 14; Acts 1 13) Though there are variations in reproducing some names, yet the fact that the sacred writers have recorded the complete list is certainly striking. It gives expression to the great importance attached by the early Church to this group of disciples of Jesus' earthly days About some of the apostles we know little more than their names and still the Twelve as a group retain a special place in the consciousness of the Church Luke repeats the list in his Acts (Acts 1 13) in the context of the transition from Jesus' resurrection to the new era of the Church The election of Mathias is not just an addition to but a *completion* of the group of the Twelve

This importance and attention given to the Twelve ultimately derive from Jesus himself who 'made' (Mk 3. 14) or formed them into a group, as the synoptics tell us (Mt 10 1, Lk 6 12-13) He was particular to instruct them on the Kingdom of God To them as a group the intimate mystery of the Kingdom is confided (Mk 4 11) Some of the parables (Lk 12 35-48) and the eschatological teaching on the coming of the last end (Lk 17 22-32) are addressed to them Jesus makes this group participant in the table-fellowship of his Last Supper. He spent the forty days after his resurrection, confirming the Twelve in their faith and teaching them further on the 'Kingdom of God' (Acts 1 3) [13]

What does all this mean ? The fact that the apostles formed a group is not to be taken as a matter of secondary importance but should be considered as a *constitutive* element in our understanding of apostolicity.

To this collegial aspect, we should add also the *pneumatic dimension* which is equally constitutive In fact, the apostles, shattered and scattered when the crisis of Jesus' death struck them, were recreated as a body by the same power of God who was at work in Jesus' resurrection Their sense of mission was deepened and they were strengthened in their ministry by the Spirit. He not only led them to a deeper knowledge and insight into the meaning of Jesus' life

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13. A WIEKENHAUSER, "Die Belehrung der Apostel durch den Auferstandenen nach" Apg 1:3, in *Vom Wort des Lebens* (Festschrift M Meinertz) ,Munich, 1951, pp. 105-113.

and teaching in the light of the Old Testament, but also accompanied them as a collaborator in their missionary endeavours. The risen Lord explicitly related the mission and witness of the apostles to the sending of the Spirit (Lk 24 48-49) Therefore, in communicating the Gospel and in building up communities the apostles relied on the demonstration of the Spirit (1 Cor 2 4) Paul refers to the community of Corinth as a letter "written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God" (2 Cor 3 3)

To be apostolic today for the Church should, therefore, imply that it allows itself to be led by the power of the Spirit on whom the apostles themselves relied for their mission Mission and ministry, tradition and succession — all these, to be qualified as '*apostolic*', would require that the Spirit permeates them and is operative in them If not, they become stumbling blocks instead of being instruments to continue the work of the apostles When the Spirit is not at work in the life and structures of a community, its apostolicity loses its credentials

II. *The Apostolicity of Individual Churches*

In the light of what has been said we could now turn our attention to the claim of the Syro-Malabar and Malankara Churches to be *normative* for the new Christian communities to be formed through missionary preaching in responsive areas of the country This claim, as we saw, is made on the plea that they are apostolic Churches and that they have an 'apostolic Christ-experience' and therefore should be present in these areas to fulfil a basic 'ecclesiological need' [14]

In the first place we should observe that apostolicity is not a forensic title to be conferred (somewhat like a degree ?) on the new Churches through the condescending presence of an 'apostolic Church' It is present *constitutively* and *interiorly* in the very faith confessed by the new communities No matter where, if genuine faith in Christ is professed, it cannot but be also *apostolic faith* For the faith of all generations rests on the witness and interpretation of Jesus by the apostles as a group and on the Gospel as transmitted by them Faith and Gospel are not private possessions of any one individual Church on which other Churches should depend

The experience of each apostle was not so different as to form each one for itself a message There was but one single message which Peter, functioning as the mouthpiece of the Twelve, announced on the day of Pentecost "Then Peter stood up *with the Eleven around him*

14 Cf Paper of Bishop Cyril Mar BASELIOS, in *Latin-Oriental Relationships in India*, CBCI Centre, New Delhi, 1982, p 31

and raising his voice, addressed them . " (Acts 2 14). To divide the apostolic experience of each individual apostle as that of Andrew, James, Bartholomew, Thomas, etc , is to divide the unity of the message and to disintegrate the unity of the apostolic body "Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed" (1 Cor 15. 11) The writings of the New Testament are the expressions in diverse forms of this one apostolic faith-experience and message "That which *we* have heard, which *we* have seen with our eyes, which *we* have looked upon and touched with our hands concerning the word of life *we* proclaim to you " (1 Jn 1 1-4)

The announcing of this one message and one faith could lead to the formation of a rich variety of ecclesial traditions which however do not exhaust them The message of the apostles as a body are above particular ecclesial traditions In announcing the Gospel in new and responsive areas, it is therefore not the ecclesial traditions — however ancient they may be — which are to be preached, but the Gospel of Christ No doubt, as Mar Baselios observes, any missionary should belong to a particular ecclesial tradition and his activity as evangelizer is an ecclesial act But does this mean that he should transport his ecclesial traditions and rite to the new areas ? Rather, there should take place a genuine and original encounter of these peoples with the Gospel, as a result of which new ecclesial traditions rooted in their own culture will be formed

> The seed which is the Word of God sprouts from the good ground watered by divine dew From this ground the seed draws nourishing elements which it transforms and assimilates to itself Finally it bears much fruit Thus, in imitation of the plan of the Incarnation, the young Churches, rooted in Christ and built up on the foundation of the apostles, take to themselves in a wonderful exchange all the riches of the nations which were given to Christ as an inheritance (cf Ps 2 8) [15]

Is it not the duty of the older Churches to rise above their rites and traditions and to facilitate the encounter of the new peoples with the Gospel rather than impose on them their own rites and ecclesial traditions on the plea that they are 'apostolic'?

In fact we find that in the course of the history of the Church, it is through the variety of responses to the message of the Gospel that various local Churches with their specific characteristics came into existence. The Church of Galatia and Corinth were different from each other not because they had two apostles who had two different apostolic experiences It was one and the same apostle Paul, with his experience of the risen Lord who preached to both, and yet we

15 Vatican II, *Ad Gentes*, n 22

have two local Churches because of two different milieux with their specific problems

Evangelization should not aim at producing replicas of a particular rite — whether of apostolic origin or not, rather, let the Church of God, through living apostolic witness and ministry, come into existence among each particular people, assuming all the richness of its tradition, culture, way of life, wisdom and thought-patterns. The best way to transmit an experience is to create such conditions as will evoke the same experience in the other, not to thrust one's own experience on him The apostolic experience of Christ is today evoked by announcing the same Gospel and the one faith of the apostles There is something original about the coming into existence of a Church community among a people For the Word of God announced has the power to elicit unforeseen responses which will characterize the particular community In this sense, the new Churches cannot be planned ahead by Churches of older origin or rites

Today a particular rite may want to create, according to its own image and likeness, other Christian communities in responsive areas of the country But what actually is required is that they become communities in the image and likeness of Christ, fashioned by the Spirit Christian communities in mission areas are not so much in need of patrons and patriarchs who will sponsor them, as of the disinterested service of people — no matter of which rite — who will understand their problems, adopt their cultural heritage and help them to make the response of faith in the ways most congenial to them.

What have, in fact, the Syro-Malabar and Malankara Churches retained from the apostolic Christ-experience of St Thomas, which the other Churches and the Universal Church do not possess as the heritage of all the apostles ? 'Apostolic' has been a much coveted attribute, and we find in the history of the Church attempts to authenticate many things as deriving from one or other apostle, and therefore enjoying special authority Such was the case with the various Gospels circulating in the name of individual apostles the Gospel of Thomas, of Philip, Juda, etc [16] Similar was also the case of the gnostics claiming to possess some secret traditions derived from the apostles The Church staunchly opposed all privatizing and sectarian understanding of the apostles and proposed instead what was common and public Whatever is essential to the faith and is normative, should belong to all the Churches and to the whole Church, there can be no imposition of private traditions

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16 Cf E HENNECKE, *New Testament Apocrypha*, vol I, SCM Press, London, 1973²

On the other hand, not all the New Testament writings we possess now were written directly by the apostles, nor were they completed within their life-time, yet they were recognized as apostolic Scriptures because they reflect genuinely the authentic mind, teaching and testimony of the apostles Their public recognition by the early Church among a variety of writings — some of them attributed to one or other apostle — meant the fixing of the Canon of the New Testament and, within it, the reception of these writings as normative for the life of faith. If today, by chance, some authentic writings of one of the Twelve apostles were to be discovered, they would not form part of the New Testament

All this shows that for a Christian community it is not the material connection with an apostle or traditions ensuing from him which matter Even if the connection of the Syro-Malabar and Syro-Malankara Churches with the apostle St Thomas were to be established beyond the shadow of a doubt, these Churches could still not on this score pose themselves as normative for the new communities in India

We do not deny that the Syro-Malabar and Malankara Churches are individual Churches with their specific characteristics and a heritage with a long history If pluralism is a hall-mark of the Church, these diversities are legitimate At the same time, we should hasten to add that these Churches, with their traditions and heritage, have been conditioned by many socio-cultural and linguistic factors, as well as by other historical circumstances Does the fact that a Church was founded by an apostle guarantee that all further accretions and the accumulation of traditions have the apostle as their author and are therefore normative ?

The fact is that these traditions of the Orientals are not due to apostolic foundation, their origin must be traced to a heavy dependence through the centuries on the Babylonian or Seleucia-Ctesiphon Church — a Church which itself was not of apostolic foundation[17] and from which the liturgical and other traditions have been inherited [18] Where in the Syro-Malabar and Malankara Churches do we find the 'apostolic Christ-experience' of St Thomas preserved ? In the Malankara Church, most of the elements distinguishing it from the Syro-Malabar Church in matters of liturgy, discipline and practice

17 "According to them (critics) Seleucia received the faith from Edessa, Nisibis and other places, perhaps through missionaries " See P J PODIPARA, *The Thomas Christians*, Bombay, 1970, p 37 According to some legend it was founded by Mari, *ibid*, p 58

18. Cf P J PODIPARA, op cit, p 79

of Christian life, have been introduced under the influence of the Church of Antioch and its Jacobite prelates in Malabar [19]

What about the collegial aspect of apostolicity ? The significance of an apostle for the Church derives from the fact that he was a member of the apostolic college No apostle can be isolated and made the exclusive patrimony of any individual Church Every apostle belongs to the whole Church and no particular Church is founded on any one apostle but on all the apostles The Syro-Malabar and Malankara Churches are therefore not founded on St Thomas but on the college of the apostles as are all other Churches

Does the fact that Thomas was not present when Jesus gave the disciples the power to bind and loose mean that he did not receive it and that, consequently, the Church or Churches he founded do not possess today the power to forgive sins ? It would certainly be absurd to affirm this The power of forgiving sins was given to the group of apostles as such To claim one individual apostle to the neglect of the apostles as a group or college can have far-reaching consequences We may ask for example what role St Thomas or St Andrew played in the writing of the New Testament, or what exactly they preached which differed from what was preached by the rest of the apostolic body ?

As for succession, the bishop of an individual Church or rite is not successor to an individual apostle, except in the case of the bishop of Rome who succeeds Peter as head in the apostolic college. In all other cases even if the office of a bishop could be traced back to a particular apostle, this would only be a matter of historical interest but of no theological significance In fact, however, can any single bishop of the Syro-Malabar or Syro-Malankara rite trace back his office to St Thomas, and claim to occupy the see of St Thomas by way of direct succession ? What we know from history is far from this. The Oriental Church in India was supplied bishops by the Church of Seleucia-Ctesiphon which, as was pointed out earlier, was not a Church of apostolic foundation [20] The bishops were consecrated by the Catholicos of Mesopotamia and were sent to India The Syro-Malabar Church itself was forbidden to choose bishops from among its local clergy [21]

Apostolicity is not a matter of privilege but a task and challenge It has to be seen in the life of a Church and in the seriousness of its

19 Cf Cyril MALANCHARUVIL, *The Syro-Malankara Church*, Alwaye 1973

20 Cf A M MUNDADAN, *The Traditions of St Thomas Christians*, Bangalore 1970, pp 137ff, P J PODIPARA, op cit, pp 53-74, Varkey J VITHAYATHIL, *The Origin and Progress of the Syro-Malabar Hierarchy*, Kottayam, 1980

21. E TISSERANT, in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, vol XIV, col. 3130.

commitment and fidelity to the Gospel. It is not a matter of foundation An ecclesial community founded by an apostle could become least apostolic of all if it failed to bear living witness to the apostolic faith and closed itself up within its own traditions The eschatological dynamism contained in the apostolic faith and message should impel it to overcome those traditions which stifle every progress and prevent a universalistic outlook

Today heresy may not be as common as false emphases and exaggerations to the detriment of the whole truth Seeing apostolicity through the eyes of traditions attached to an individual apostle not only undermines the integral truth on apostolicity but becomes a 'sin' against the concrete exercise of the mission of the Church and the communion of the Churches

When we in India today profess our faith saying 'I believe in the apostolic Church', does this mean that we believe in the Syro-Malabar or the Malankara Church ? The apostolicity of the Church is an object of our faith and, as such, we are not professing that St Thomas came to India, but we believe in the Gospel message, faith, ministry, witness and mission transmitted by the apostolic body and enduring in the Church of today in a living way It is this which is to be transmitted to the Christian communities in mission areas through preaching and witness

Finally, from a Church-centred understanding we should today move to a God-centred and Christ-centred understanding of apostolicity and view it as a call to the Church primarily to pursue her mission in the footsteps of the apostles rather than of transmitting preserved ecclesial traditions — however much these may be dear to us and however much we may be emotionally attached to them What should percolate through the Church is the mission of Christ For in pursuing evangelization, the Church is not doing mission as though it derived from the apostles themselves, much less from one apostle, it is continuing the mission which Christ received from God And in doing so, it follows in the footsteps of the apostles and is sustained by their witness

Speaking to Third World Theologians

Thomas M GANNON, S J *

ONE of the more intriguing developments in theology over the past decade has been a growing interest in the interface of theology and sociology In large part, this interest has been stimulated by the emergence of liberation theology, with its insistence that social analysis, properly undertaken, should form a basic ingredient of theological method If one is to contextualize theology properly today, so the argument goes, then sound social analysis will not only help theologians move beyond personal experience of their milieu, but also provide an empirical and analytic basis for theological reflection, as well as for the judgments and actions which represent the religious believer's response to contemporary needs

To assert the necessity of linking theology with social analysis does not gainsay the fact that this conjunction poses very real and complex problems

First, social analysis has its own techniques and methodological requirements which are very different from theology Even though social analysis may be organically related to theological reflection, it does not substitute for it Nor can theology be reduced to sociology The two exist in uneasy tension — a tension between Christian faith and the human instrumentalities by which that faith seeks to understand and shape secular reality This tension parallels the ones expressed in older discussions about the relation of theology to Christian philosophy and Christian humanism

Second, partly because of differences in methodology, sociologists sometimes find it difficult to understand theological language and argument, just as theologians find it difficult to know what sociologists are talking about This not uncommon problem is increased when speaking with Third World theologians because of their fondness for

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certain terms derived from Marxist or neo-Marxist social theory and their understanding of theology as oriented toward action, even revolution It is easy, therefore, for sociologists to have the impression that Third World theology is a type of radical social theory (like Marxism), that at its heart is a purely secular passion for justice, freedom, and independence

A third problem is related to what theologians call the *via negativa*, the critical negation of inadequacies of the Christian tradition, which sometimes includes spirituality and the concept of divinity As Gregory Baum observes, this is all too easily understood by social scientists (especially sociologists of religion) as a repudiation of the historic Christian faith [1] Even sociologists sympathetic to the concerns of Third World theology often have the impression that, particularly in its extreme manifestations, this theology is simply a theory of action, with little or no interest in either prayer or doctrine Although I do not share all these impressions, I do not find them fanciful When "God" or "Christ" is conceived principally as a summary symbol of liberation, or when Christian eschatology begins to merge with secular concepts of human progress, profound feelings of awe, majesty, and mystery are themselves given little opportunity for expression When the classic opposition between "church" and "world" is replaced by a tension between the unredeemed capitalist society and utopias of various kinds, any sense of individualized evil is eroded, leaving small interest in redemption Why confess sins when society is to blame ?

Fourth, even when one grants the relevance of social analysis to contemporary theology, there is question of "whose analysis" Both political and liberation theology are quite clear in asserting that any attempt to understand society moves along a particular value perspective it is impossible to look at one's society from a neutral position When theologians argue this way, they are joining a controversy which has long engaged social scientists is sociological research ever value-free or value-neutral ? The connection between science and commitment has been defended not only by left-wing sociologists (Marxists and non-Marxists), but also by scholars as diverse as Karl Mannheim, Max Weber, and C Wright Mills This "perspectival" view of social

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1 Gregory BAUM, "Liberation Theology and 'The Supernatural'", *The Ecumenist*, Vol 19 (September-October, 1981), pp 81-87 See also, David MARTIN, "Disorientations to Mainstream Religion The Context of Reorientation in New Religious Movements", in Bryan R WILSON (ed), *The Social Impact of New Religious Movements* (New York The Rose of Sharon Press, 1981), pp 43-58 On the dialogue between theology and sociology, see Martin, John Orme MILLS, and W S F PICKERING (eds), *Sociology and Theology Alliance and Conflict* (London The Harvester Press, 1980)

science and of theology becomes especially critical in dealing with Third World theology. Most of its central sociological themes ultimately involve questions of value: Is productivity a viable goal, and if so for how long and at what non-economic costs ? Is affluence more or less important than relative equality ? To which should be given moral priority — individual freedom or collective security, pluralism or community, enterprise or harmony ? Not only are there no easy ways to choose between such options, but no way at all of doing so on the basis of social scientific evidence. The ultimate desirability of any of these value alternatives, just as the ultimate desirability of capitalism or socialism, cannot be scientifically "proven". Even more important is the preponderance of left-wing ideologies among Third World intellectuals, which cannot be explained or confronted on rational grounds alone. Frequently it has grown out of their experience of joining groups of struggling people, often accompanied by dramatic changes in their own personal lives which heretofore had been lived within the protective casing of the middle class. When the dialogue engages Third World and "Western" scholars, these problems are further compounded by the fact that key concepts, like "capitalism", are not only themselves complex and associated with considerable ideological covering and mythic overtones, but they also evoke very different connotations based on quite divergent experiences of the reality as it is practised in different parts of the world Unless, of course, all parties to the dialogue believe in the same myths.[2]

These cautions are prompted by the appearance of two recent statements by Third World theologians the statement published by the Fifth Conference of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT) held in New Delhi in August, 1981 and

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2 Although the term "myth" has long had a religious connotation, I use it here in a more secularized sense, along the lines developed by Georges SOREL (*Reflections on Violence*, 1908) to mean any set of ideas that infuses transcendent meaning into the lives of men — transcendent with regard to the routine and selfish concerns of ordinary life It is through myths that men are lifted above their captivity in the ordinary, attain powerful visions of the future, and become capable of collective actions to realize these visions In this usage, myth transcends both pragmatic and theoretical rationality, while at the same time it strongly affects them. The dominant myth associated with capitalism is growth, with socialism, revolution Cf Peter L BERGER, *Pyramids of Sacrifice* (London· Penguin, 1974), especially pp 23-48 On the divergent experiences of capitalism and socialism in the West and in the Third World, see Marion LEVY, *Modernization — Latecomers and Survivors* (New York· Basic Books, 1972), A. N AGARWALA and S P SINGH (eds), *The Economics of Underdevelopment* (London Oxford University Press, 1972), Hajima NAKAMURA, *Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples — India, China, Tibet, and Japan* (Honolulu University Press of Hawaii, 1981) All of these works, plus the citations contained in the remaining footnotes, have greatly shaped my own thinking. Most influential has been BERGER's *Pyramids of Sacrifice* and his more recent article, "Speaking to the Third World", *Commentary*, Vol 72 (October, 1981), pp 29-36, the central themes of which are recapitulated and elaborated in the present essay.

that of the October, 1981 interdisciplinary research seminar organized by the National Biblical Catechetical Liturgical Centre in Bangalore on the topic· "The Indian Church in the Struggle for a New Society".[3] Each statement merits serious attention and debate. As a contribution to this effort and to the dialogue between theology and sociology, I propose to examine some of the basic presuppositions underlying the social analysis sections of both documents (EATWOT, nn 9-15 and "Indian Church", nn 9-32) Admittedly, any attempt to examine foundations of a theory is an interpretation; it is therefore controversial and may itself be questioned by Third World theologians. There seems, in fact, two kinds of debate regarding this type of theology, one of them taking place among Christians committed to a liberationist perspective, the other involving participants some of whom are for and some against liberation theology. I find myself situated between the two approaches I am deeply sympathetic to the issues raised by Third World theologians and to the whole enterprise of a theology for the Third World; but I am not committed to a liberationist perspective

The Third World: Images and Reality

By now the very phrase "Third World" evokes a multitude of images, positive as well as negative Empirically, of course, the words bear little resemblance to reality — except, perhaps, at the United Nations, where the so-called group of 77 (now numbering well over 100 nations) does assume real political form But what, after all, do Brazil and Bangladesh have in common, or Singapore and Sri Lanka, not to mention the oil-rich nations of the Gulf and the starvation-ridden countries of the Sahel ? The so-called Third World encompasses countries of enormously diverse economic, social, political, and cultural characteristics Nor are alternative terms an improvement, like the more recent United Nations expressions, "developing" and "less developed" countries, or the currently fashionable "South", as in the "North/South" dialogue or "North/South global negotiations" India is "South" and Australia is "North", while the industrial societies of the Soviet bloc are nowhere, left out of the dialogue altogether. Whatever else it may or may not be, the Third World is a rhetorical reality, and when people of the West speak to the poor nations of Asia, Africa, and Latin America (and even to some of the less poor nations in these regions), they are indeed addressing the Third World. When theologians from these nations gather to reflect on the contem-

3 The EATWOT statement was published in VIDYAJYOTI, Vol. 46 (February, 1982), pp 81-96 The document on the Indian Church is found in D S AMALORPAVADASS (ed), *The Indian Church in the Struggle for a New Society*, (Bangalore: NBCLC, 1981), pp. 41-77

porary challenge their experiences pose for theology and Christian witness, they too are speaking of a reality they perceive as meaningful and important.

The phrase "Third World" itself originated in the early 1950's and was proclaimed as a reality at the Bandung Conference in 1955, when a number of "non-aligned" countries (including Sukarno's Indonesia, Nehru's India, and Tito's Yugoslavia) asserted their right to pursue a path independent of the two superpower blocs But already more was implied than simple non-alignment There was also the notion of a "third way" to development, different from the allegedly flawed models of American-style capitalism and Soviet-style communism. Just what that way might be was never made precise. Presumably, it was more socialist than the American model and more democratic than the Soviet one — some sort of "social democracy", yet not a mere copy of Western models but an indigenous construction doing justice to the cultural traditions of the countries first gathered at Bandung These implications have remained in place, and even though more than twenty-five years have passed since Bandung, there has been no sharper definition of a development "model" to which all of the countries concerned might jointly adhere This vagueness, however, has not prevented powerful emotional associations with the phrase "Third World", not only in the countries judged to belong to that world, but in Western countries as well.

In the Western mind, the phrase may evoke eschatological themes dating all the way back to Joachim of Flora's Third Age and to the dream of a Third Rome For some, there is the additional association with the three-fold Hegelian dialectic, the third moment of which (the synthesis) will solve redemptively the contradictions of the preceding thesis and antithesis — in this case, presumably, the contradictions between capitalism and communism In the 1960's and 1970's, the counter-culture evinced a generalized interest in the Third World as a place where simpler, healthier, and spiritually more profound ways of life were to be found — a sentiment not unlike those of some contemporary Third World theologians, who view village life as a place where values are practised that are much more in tune with the Gospel.

Not surprisingly, there has been a counter-image of the Third World — an image of hopelessly corrupt, incompetent, and oppressive regimes, opposed to Western purposes and ideals. In this conception, instead of noble revolutionaries and wholesome peasants, we get predatory dictators. As an overall stance toward the Third World, of course, an attitude of hostile contempt is no better than one of awed

admiration. If nothing else, the very diversity of the Third World itself should preclude such one-sided responses. The Third World is neither an arena for utopianisms nor a zone in which to locate sundry demonologies.

The real problem with such exaggerated images is that they pervert the reality itself, and insofar as they consciously or unconsciously influence one's thinking, undermine sound social analysis. For this reason, it is important to gain some perspective on a phenomenon which is, at bottom, nothing less than the entry onto the stage of history of vast masses of people, who until now have lived in a situation that can, in many instances, be accurately described as pre-historical. Immense physical and moral anguish has been associated with this entry. There is, after all, a timeless dignity to the forms of human existence provided by tribe, village, and other traditional structures, and their disturbance by the turbulent forces of modernity has hardly been an unambiguous benefit

But all is not anguish and pain Take, for example, the overcrowded slums of the enormous urban centres of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, symbolized by the names of Calcutta, Lagos, Mexico City. It is easy to contrast the turbulence and undeniable misery of these places with the supposed tranquillity and relative contentment of the villages from which many of these cities' inhabitants have only recently arrived But there is another side to the picture The overwhelming majority of these people came voluntarily, knowing full well what to expect Third World peasants are no less rational than Third World intellectuals in making important decisions for themselves and their children, and the networks of clan and caste usually insure that reliable information is fed back to home villages They keep coming because they believe that their chances of a better life are greater in the cities than at home Surely, the quest is often frustrated; but many times it is realized And precisely in places like Calcutta and Bombay one is impressed by the vitality, courage and resourcefulness of people who are given hope for a better life It cannot surprise anyone that politics and economics in these circumstances should be volatile — even violent — often irrational and destructive But the politics and economics of the putatively more developed West have not exactly been a model of order and virtue in this century.

Now if the social analysis of Third World theologians consisted mainly in proclaiming these realities and examining them in depth, there should be no serious difficulty with it. Even if these statements insisted that it was the West's obligation — humanly, morally and

religiously — to help, assent would be easy. The eradication of starvation and of degrading misery is a moral imperative for states and for the international community. Unfortunately, many statements, like the recent ones from New Delhi and Bangalore, go considerably further. As a result, except for "true believers", it is virtually impossible, either intellectually or morally, to assent to them as a whole or even to take them with the seriousness with which their authors obviously intend them to be accepted

Some Ideological Presuppositions of Third World Theology

Despite these difficulties, it is possible to delineate a series of propositions which explicitly or implicitly underlie the social analysis of both the New Delhi and Bangalore documents and which represent an often unchallenged ideological core common to the social analysis of much Third World theologizing today

1 Development is not just a matter of economic growth. Rather, one can only regard as development those processes of change in which the dynamism of economic growth is harnessed to transcendent social purposes — to the progressive rescue from degrading poverty of masses of people and to a more egalitarian distribution of the benefits of growth

2 The causes of Third World poverty must be sought primarily outside the Third World itself — historically in the depredations of colonialism and imperialism, structurally in the consequences of an unjust international capitalistic system which is today heavily weighted in favour of the rich countries of the West (or "North") against the poor countries of the Third World (or "South").

3 Establishing a just international system is a prerequisite for all aspects of development, not only economic but political and human as well To do this requires a rejection of capitalism and the exploration of viable forms of socialism which would both bring about true development and respect indigenous religions, cultures and human freedom

4 The West owes "compensations" or "reparations" to the Third World for past acts of exploitation It also owes the Third World redress of the unjust international economic system through a variety of juridical, political, and economic measures. In the long run, this will benefit all countries and will result in a more stable world order.

These secular propositions, I suggest, constitute an intellectual and moral whole. They are based on a set of presuppositions about

the nature of the social world and expressed in a moral — and ultimately, religious — context: it is a view of what the world *ought* to be Nor are these propositions intended as an abstract intellectual position They comprise a political as much as a social statement, and appear aimed at legitimating specific objectives. This is not the place to discuss the far-reaching juridical and international problems pertinent to such objectives or to take up the social, economic and political questions currently on the agenda of "global negotiations", e g , terms of trade, aid levels, control over natural resources, regulation of transnational corporations Rather, I shall confine my comments to some of the main themes of the position articulated above which I feel most need open and serious debate Frankly, this response represents an American reaction from an American sociologist, but it is one with which others in both the Third World and in the West I know would agree

The Issue of Development Versus Growth

To the proposition that development is not the same as economic growth, I strongly assent Demurring from an overemphasis on equality, I should also assent to a definition of development which includes greater access to a decent life and to institutions which protect the human rights of everyone in a society Development, after all, cannot be understood in a value-free way, it is a term which carries explicit ethical, political and religious overtones, connoting a general improvement in well-being of the population undergoing the process — if not immediately, then at least as a future prospect [4] Thus, development is conceived not simply as a goal of rational action in the economic, political and social spheres, but as a process that at least carries with it some moral approval and political purpose, and one which supplies a focus for redemptive hopes and expectations for

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4 Three different terms recur in discussions of development and it is useful to distinguish them First is "growth", and it is probably easiest to define since economists employ two rather straightforward ways to measure it rise in the total economic output of a society (gross national product or G.N P.) and rise in the *per capita* output Under contemporary conditions, economic growth is usually the result of introducing or improving the technological means of production and distribution Because this process affects all the institutions and the whole culture of a society, a second term has been used to denote the wider transformation growth brings, "modernization" While there are many disagreements about the specific components of modernization, as well as the differential weight to be given them and the overall relationship between modernization and economic growth, there is widespread agreement on how the phenomenon is to be defined The problem of definition is most complicated with regard to the term, "development" It is often used as an equivalent of growth and/or modernization, in which case the utility of an additional concept is questionable In its general usage, however, the concept has a much stronger undertone of positive evaluation than is implied in the other two terms; it is this broader meaning that is intended here

both individuals and a society. Put more simply, development means good growth and desirable modernization, people who speak in these terms are obviously engaged in the business of ethics and religion, and at least potentially, of politics.[5]

Nevertheless, the underlying idea of economic relations embodied in the four propositions above cannot be accepted Economic relations are seen here simply as a "zero-sum" game, a vast elaboration of Proudhon's classic aphorism that "property is theft" The argument in support of this position is not complex and may be summarized briefly Wealth is acquired at the expense of the poor, resources are owned by one and taken away by the other The rich countries are rich because they plundered the others and this continues to be the basic relationship between the two Thus, both wealth and poverty among nations are the result of the same global process of exploitation This propensity to exploitation is endemic to capitalism as a socio-economic system — that is, imperialism is a necessary phase in the history of capitalist society The problem of the poor countries, therefore, is not that they lack resources, technological expertise, modern institutions, or cultural traits conducive to development, but that they are being exploited by a world-wide capitalist system and its particular domestic and foreign imperialist agents The practical strategies which issue from this argument all point in one direction imperialism must be defeated Development can occur only as an exploited country frees itself from dependency on international capitalism Socialism, in contrast, is the only system within which the problems of under-development may be successfully attacked, even though it is debatable whether a socialist system worth emulating already exists in the world today

Since this critique of international capitalism is so pivotal to the social analysis of many Third World theologians, it is important to consider it more carefully Without doubt, the capitalist theory and practice of development has been attacked since its inception, but the criticism has recently become much more influential, today, in fact, it appears to be the dominant position among Third World intellectuals Although what Marxists like to call "bourgeois social science" hardly provides a unified position on either the theory or the practice of capitalism, it is possible nonetheless to speak of a distinctively capitalistic idea of development through growth At its most basic, this

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5 See, Robert HEILBRONER, *The Great Ascent* (New York Harper and Row, 1963), Simon KUZNETS, *Modern Economic Growth* (New Haven Yale University Press, 1966), C E. BLACK, *The Dynamics of Modernization* (New York Harper and Row, 1966), Peter BERGER, Brigitte BERGER, and Hansfried KELLNER, *The Homeless Mind — Modernization and Consciousness* (London Pelican, 1974)

idea is a universal projection of a vision of economic plenty in the context of political democracy and a dynamic class society, a vision geared to the growth of an economy which, at least in its essential character, is based on the market. Closely aligned with this vision are the values of personal and political freedom, as expressed in the notion of a "free world" The critique of this idea asks two fundamental questions Who benefits ? Who decides ? The questions may also be phrased. Whose growth ? Whose market ?

In answering these questions, capitalist theory has long maintained that the benefits of growth will eventually extend to all sectors of society (the "trickle-down effect", or more prosaically, the "spread effect") Sometimes, the benefits are seen, however modestly, already to be taking place — e g, in the rise in a country's gross national product or in its *per capita* output — or otherwise as a virtually certain expectation for the future. The theory further argues that the co-existence of wealth and poverty is a necessary stage in the development process, capital must first be rapidly accumulated in preparation for a "take-off" in the economy Once a certain level of accumulation is reached, the benefits of growth will supposedly be distributed in a more equitable fashion, again because of the intrinsic economic dynamic of the process of development History is often cited as demonstrating the validity of this argument, since the early stages of development in Europe and America were marked by precisely this kind of polarization, and the misery of the lower classes was possibly even worse than it is today in most of the Third World Only in its later stages did the process produce a more equitable distribution, as well as a general rise in the standard of living that benefited everyone in the society In other words, as the economic pie gets bigger, not only do the lower classes get a bigger slice, but they will be much better off even if their slice remains the same, because the pie itself has become bigger. The first priority in development, therefore, must be to create a bigger pie

It is obviously difficult to disprove an argument which depends for verification on an empirically inaccessible future (an even greater difficulty, it should be noted, with regard to socialism) But critics of this view have done more than object on speculative grounds They have offered some convincing evidence which gives little support to the pious hopes of the "spread effect". In much of the Third World there has been an increasingly polarized distribution of income and wealth; the lower classes have been getting less, not more. Nor has their absolute condition improved appreciably, if at all. There is proportionately more hunger and disease today than a few decades

ago, and much of the Third World has witnessed a dramatic rise in both unemployment and underemployment Given these trends, there are no grounds on which to hope that a reversal is predictable In fact, presently available data argue quite the reverse

This kind of growth without development is illustrated by the penetration of a Third World economy by foreign capital As many economists have argued, this penetration distorts the native economy by developing not its internal economic and social forces, but those forces most important to the country or countries from which the foreign capital comes.[6] The same distortion creates an essentially colonial structure for the benefit of foreign capitalists The structure of this colonialism is not the same as the old, which was largely extractive The new colonialism promotes industrialization of a peculiar kind, one which is capital-intensive rather than labour-intensive, thus creating unemployment in the "developing" country rather than relieving it Generally it emphasizes consumer goods (like automobiles, refrigerators, television sets) which can be purchased by only a small minority of the population and which require a sophisticated technology that must be imported at great expense, often along with the technicians needed to operate it Consequently, the gulf is deepened between rich and poor, and allocation of scarce resources to this kind of industrialization actually prevents developing other sectors of society These problems are exacerbated by the fact that the profits of new industries are exported back to the investing country, leaving the developing country with an increasing unfavourable balance of payments The debts incurred by launching highly expensive industrialization further add to this unfavourable balance The overall failure of so-called "import substitution" (the strategy of developing local industry to substitute for importing expensive industrial goods from abroad) confirms this argument. Neo-colonialism, therefore, means increasing impoverishment and ever-greater dependence on foreign forces — in André Gunder Frank's apt phrase, it means "the development of underdevelopment" [7] Neocolonialism also distorts local political systems by mobilizing alliances between outside interests and local strata who find it to their advantage to collaborate with the outsiders This creates an "internal colonialism" corresponding to the colonial domination from abroad. Just as the "metropolis" exploits the "colony", so

6. Birla Institute of Scientific Research Economic Research Division, *Does Foreign Aid Help?* (New Delhi Allied Publications, 1981)

7 André Gunder FRANK, *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America* (London. Pelican, 1971)

does the indigenous colonial class exploit the rest of the population.[8]

This critique, as I have said, is not without empirical support. The high social and political costs of capitalism are a matter of evidence, not dogmatic faith Polarization between rich and poor nations, and within poorer countries between the relatively affluent and the sectors of massive misery, growth in the major indicators of misery (from outright starvation to pervasive unemployment), an increase in economic dependence of poor nations on the rich (e g., mounting debts, deteriorating trade and balances of payment, vulnerability to decisions made by governments and non-governmental bodies in rich countries)— these are not inventions of Marxist ideologists, but empirical facts available to any observer The "spread effect" has not taken place and it is difficult to see how it will The argument that Western history proves that a reversal must occur is specious, Western history has many specific characteristics (economic, social, political and cultural) which are simply not present in the same form in the Third World today The fact that economic benefits were more equitably distributed and more widely available in England between 1830 and 1930 offers no guarantee that a comparable process will take place in India Further, the incomparably greater annual population increase in Third World countries makes it clear that these countries cannot afford the leisurely schedule of such a process.

It is possible, therefore, to accept substantial portions of the Third World critique of capitalist development without accepting its overall theory, particularly in its Marxist-Leninist expression The real questions arising from specific criticisms of capitalist development

8 The conceptual framework for this critique is found in the Marxist-Leninist theory of imperialism Its key formulation was made by LENIN himself in 1916, in *Imperialism as the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, although this has been subsequently elaborated and modified by different Marxist writers The most important proposition of the theory is that all the evils brought on by foreign capitalist involvement are necessary consequences of capitalism in its present stage, they are not historical accidents, but "systemic" to capitalism as such For an overview of the economic aspects of this theory, see Paul BARAN, *The Political Economy of Growth* (London Penguin, 1973), which is a basic text for the recent formulations of the theory One of the best available critiques is by Benjamin COHEN, *The Question of Imperialism* (New York Basic Books, 1973) What is interesting today is that many who would not fully identify with Marxist-Leninist theory are nevertheless convinced that the evils of capitalism in the Third World invalidate the very nature of capitalism itself, even as it exists in North America or Western Europe The meaning of this position is not easy to interpret, in part, at least, it may simply be an extension of the injunction against ethnocentrism "Ethnocentrism" is commonly used to denigrate the imposition of Western perspectives and Western values on non-Western situations Recently, this has taken another turn it is no longer merely a methodological *caveat* against the use of Western frames of reference, but is, in addition, a moral attack on Western values as such

revolve around two issues: (a) are the principal causes of Third World poverty to be sought primarily outside the Third World itself, and (b) is the basis of the demand for a complete and outright rejection of capitalism empirically supportable.

External Versus Internal Causes

The overall thesis that colonialism and imperialism have impoverished and hampered the development of Third World societies is, at the very least, highly questionable. As P. T Bauer and others have repeatedly pointed out, the poorest countries in the world tend to be those whose economic relations with the West have been minimal, while many ex-colonies have done very well indeed.[9] Nor is there any way in which the affluence of a long list of Western countries, including the United States, can be causally explained by colonial exploitation The major causal factors of this affluence were almost certainly and to an overwhelming degree indigenous to Western societies themselves, rooted in a highly peculiar constellation of social, cultural, and political factors, and no doubt dependent as well on a good bit of historical accident This does not deny that exploitation may well have been one of the many factors in a complex historical process (as, for example, in the case of England and India). But historians are still arguing — and will likely argue for a long time — whether the great colonial powers like Great Britain and France in fact profited more from their colonies than they put into them. Moreover, if England developed economically as a result of the plunder of India, why did not the plunder of the Americas produce the same effects in Spain and Portugal ? Nor is it clear that colonialism facilitated worthwhile plunder in all cases. France, for example, acquired most of its colonial empire after its domestic development had reached an advanced stage of industrializing capitalism, the same was true of Germany As for American capitalism, the theory lacks even superficial credibility for the period of original capitalist "take-off" In short, the Leninist theory of imperialism as an explanation for the past economic growth of the West simply will not stand up to the evidence

But what of the West's present affluence ? There is, after all, the related assertion that this too results from the exploitation of the Third World, "Northern" wealth is extracted from "Southern" poverty Again, the proposition makes little sense. With the

9 P T BAUER, *Dissent on Development* (London Widenfed and Nicholson, 1972) Regarding the special appeal of socialism in the Third World, see I Robert SINAI, *The Challenge of Modernization* (New York Norton, 1964), John KAUTSKY, *Communism and the Politics of Development* (New York, John Wiley, 1968)

exception of some few natural resources, among which oil is paramount, the economies of the "North" are quite independent of the "South" Indeed, this is precisely the problem of Third World economies which, in order to develop, must seek to enter the "rich" system under favourable conditions Most detrimental to the Leninist theory, however, is that the Third World is not an expanding market for capital investment relative to such expansion within the advanced industrial societies themselves To American capital, for example, the importance of the whole Third World as an area of foreign investment is quite insignificant compared to the importance of Western Europe and Japan In fact, it may be argued that if the Third World were entirely closed to Western capital tomorrow, economic readjustments within the capitalist system could be achieved in a short time and without major dislocations This would appear to dispose of the Leninist thesis that imperialism is necessary because of the requirements of capital investment

The affluence of the West is largely due to the superior productive system it has created, a system which by now is mainly autonomous Expansion of the system is largely internal — in the American case, internal actually meaning domestic in the case of the international capitalist system, internal meaning within the countries of advanced industrial capitalism There are, of course, predictions that this state of affairs cannot last, but so far the evidence runs in the opposite direction Such a situation poses a very real and difficult problem for the relationship between advanced industrial countries and the Third World, and the problem has a moral dimension Recognizing that dimension, however, arises from our common humanity and from the solidarity among nations (a theme recurring in papal pronouncements on this matter since at least *Populorum Progressio*), not from Leninist theory, distorted history, bad law, or pathological guilt feelings In this connection, any demand for "compensation" or "reparation" is rendered spurious — historically, juridically and morally It is also absurd One need only to ask whether it recognizes any statute of limitation or how the putative debtors are to be defined Can Hungary demand compensation from Mongolia for the depredations of Genghis Khan ? Are black Americans to sue the states of West Africa for the collusion of past political authorities with the slave trade ?

The most serious distortion of economic reality in the Third World critique of capitalism, however, is its emphasis on *external* rather than internal obstacles to development Let me stipulate again that there are situations where external forces serve to impede

the development of a country. In these situations the character and strength of such forces must be specified and assessed, not merely assumed; and the country in question is fully entitled to seek relief by whatever means. I would contend, nevertheless, that such situations are rare — except in the massive case of Soviet imperialism which, for reasons that are patently political, is hardly ever mentioned in this context. The most frequent obstacles to development in the Third World are internal to the societies themselves. Among these are economic systems that stultify growth and impede productivity; political corruption, oppression of people to the point where they cease to be economically active, persecution of economically productive minorities (e g., Asians in East Africa and the Chinese in Southeast Asia); and, in some situations, indigenous social patterns and cultural values that are not conducive to economic activity. This scape-goating process is a convenient strategy for Third World elites who are either unable or unwilling to face up to internal obstacles But there is no reason why Third World theologians should fortify them in this evasion

The argument for external causes of poverty is often butressed by pointing to the growing gap between rich and poor nations and the deteriorating condition of the Third World as a whole. While some data can be found to support this contention in the past, it is not clear that they continue to be valid, especially in recent years when Western economies have faced serious difficulties, many of them caused by the astronomical rise in the cost of energy Of course, escalating energy costs have also had a tremendous effect on the economies of Third World countries Curiously, however, OPEC is virtually never mentioned by Third World critics as a cause of poverty in their societies, roughly, I suppose, for the same political reasons that Soviet imperialism is seldom mentioned as an agent of exploitation. At the same time, while the condition in some Third World countries has continued to deteriorate, there have also been phenomenal success stories in the Third World, such as those in South Korea, Taiwan, and some of the ASEAN states.

With such emphasis on external factors, one gets the impression from critiques like those embodied in the New Delhi and Bangalore statements that development is viewed as something to be wrested from others — specifically, from the industrialized countries of the West, or rather from their governments. It is to be "development by fiat", following upon a political struggle in which concessions are won by moral suasion or other pressures. But this obfuscates the fact that development, in any meaning of the term, cannot be the

result of political (or juridical) arrangements between states, even though such arrangements may be useful in particular circumstances. Rather, development is the result of sustained economic activity of large numbers of people, the product of effort, hard work, and ingenuity. It cannot be wrested from someone else, like a chunk of valuable marble. Indeed, such a view hides a paternalism of its own. If development is something that can be wrested from the West, then it is the West who grants it. This position stands in curious contradiction to the oft-repeated Third World principles of self-reliance and freedom from dependency.

The kind of Third World critique of capitalist development in the New Delhi and Bangalore statements, therefore, embodies a confusion of inference and evidence that makes any wholesale rejection of capitalism as inconclusive as an outright rejection of socialism, if similarly argued. It is the kind of confusion classically represented by Duns Scotus' argument in favour of Mary's Immaculate Conception: *decuit, potuit, igitur fecit* I do not deny the validity of inference, but inference is not evidence, and the two should be clearly distinguished Failure to make the distinction fundamentally flaws and undermines the social analysis of both statements.

Socialism Versus Capitalism

What, then, about the proposition that true development in the Third World requires the rejection of capitalism and the erection of some form of socialism ? Several comments are pertinent, the first of which is obvious but often neglected A repudiation of capitalism in the Third World does not necessarily imply a similar repudiation in the West. Conversely, endorsement of capitalism in the West does not in itself mean endorsement for the Third World The necessity of linking the two only arises from Marxist theory. Moreover, opposition to capitalism is very different in these two parts of the world In the West, by and large, capitalism has been delivering on its promises To be sure, there are zones of misery in Western countries, and by abstract ethical standards it is possible to question how equitably the goods are distributed. Until relatively recently, income distribution in the West (including the United States) has remained fairly constant; the lower income groups have not changed appreciably relative to higher income groups. But the fact remains that Western industrial capitalism has produced a better life, materially, for larger numbers of people than any previous or contemporary socioeconomic system in human history. Nowhere has socialism been able to match this feat, not even where conditions

have been very favourable (as, for example, in East Germany or Czechoslovakia). Anti-capitalism in the West, consequently, has been largely ideological The most strident anti-capitalist rhetoric in recent years has come from a relatively narrow band of middle-class intellectuals, whose real complaints probably have more to do with the discontents of industrial civilization as a whole and their place in it than with the specific character of capitalism in its different versions.

In contrast, the situation is quite different in the Third World. Capitalism has not been delivering the "goods", at least for most people. As a result, opposition to capitalism has been able to enlist broad popular support, including that of the lower and lowest classes This has been an anti-capitalism of desperation The fundamental difference in capitalist performance naturally leads to different prognoses for the West and for the Third World It is most likely that capitalism, with whatever modifications it continues to make, will continue to be the paramount form of socioeconomic organization in the West, and certainly in the United States But to say this immediately raises the question of what kind of capitalism This is not the place to speculate on such matters, but it should be noted that already there is no Western country (emphatically not the United States) in which capitalism exists in its pristine, politically unmodified form Even Sweden, often cited as the most far-reaching Western "path to socialism", has retained basically capitalist forms of economic organization, even as its government has sought to transform various sectors of social life in "socialist" terms Western capitalism, just like socialism in the Soviet orbit, is not monolithic If the market is the key category of capitalism and public planning that of socialism, then there have been substantial convergences between the two systems in advanced industrial societies Western capitalism has been greatly modified in a "socialist" sense by the interventions of government; Soviet-style socialism, especially in recent years (e g., in Yugoslavia, Hungary, and even Russia itself) has been modified in a "capitalist" direction by introducing market mechanisms to limit the range of centralizing planning.

If one may expect the continued dominance of a modified capitalism in the West, the situation in the Third World is more difficult to predict Nevertheless, it seems likely that a number of these countries will move in a socialist rather than capitalist direction, largely because socialism continues to stir profound, even mythic, aspirations for community and solidarity, aspirations that are likely to intensify under the pressures of modernization and with which capitalism has

not coped very well. Even if capitalism might work better in the "long run", its short-run social tensions and pressures may become too difficult to bear in many countries. The real question then becomes. what kind of socialism will be adopted ? Apart from failings of theory, therefore, there are good pragmatic reasons for avoiding doctrinaire positions with regard to either capitalism or socialism Both are likely to survive in different forms in different parts of the world.

My second comment pertains to the correlates of capitalism and socialism. Even though a comprehensive theory of capitalism has yet to be developed, one thing we do know is the empirical correlation between capitalism and political liberty, as well as the correlation between political liberty and the whole gamut of human rights. That correlation can be stated with great precision. every democracy in the contemporary world has a capitalist economy, no society with a socialist economy is democratic The fact that a sizable number of countries, all now in the Third World, are capitalist and non-democratic does not negate this correlation, which can be theoretically explained in terms of the brakes on state power which a private sector *tends* to produce. Capitalism, by its internal logic, has freed the individual from collective restraints and opened up large new areas for individual options It achieves this by positing an "antagonistic" or "adversary" model of society, in which individuals and groups struggle with each other for economic success and social status. One empirical consequence of this is that capitalism has a strong pluralistic thrust Another is that, minimally, capitalism has a "private sector" not directly under the aegis of the political order As Karl Polanyi and others have pointed out, the major price for this advance is that capitalism has seriously weakened and continues to threaten the traditional structures of community which had sheltered the individual from both economic and psychological isolation.[10] In sociological terms, the main cost of capitalist freedom has been *anomie*. In this regard, socialism, with its ascriptive and allocative thrust, is much closer to the collectivism of most traditional cultures than modern capitalism. Both socialism and most pre-modern traditions posit an ideal of society in which harmony prevails, a harmony pre-established by the political order which incorporates all private sectors within it While the pressures of advanced industrial capitalism do not destroy community, they do challenge communities to retrench

10. Karl POLANYI, *The Great Transformation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957). For a recent analysis of the non-economic costs of advanced industrialism in the West, particularly the United States, see Morris JANOWITZ, *The Last Half-Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978).

their holistic claims on individuals and groups and narrow their functions. The capacity of local communities to cope with these challenges presents one of the difficult problems for Western societies. Such problems, however, do not negate the important historical connection between the economic market and political democracy.

Third, another thing about which we know a good deal is the relationship between economic systems and success in achieving development goals To put the matter simply, among the socialist regimes of the Third World there is not a single success story — defining success not in "Western" terms, but precisely in the Third World terms of victory over the more wretched forms of poverty and a reasonable degree of egalitarian distribution. The typical record of Third World socialism is one of economic stagnation, often perpetuating abject poverty if not outright starvation. The species of egalitarianism prevailing among the "masses" is one of an equality among serfs, lorded over by a privileged elite of party bureaucrats and managers The terms "neo-patrimonialism" or "social feudalism" aptly describe it In fact, the vast panorama of different paths to development in the contemporary world only reinforces the conclusion that socialism is incapable of producing in terms of its own promises. To be sure, not all capitalist systems have succeeded, and admittedly, we do not yet understand enough about the reasons for the failures. There are no guarantees for societal decisions Nevertheless, all the success stories we do know have occurred in countries with capitalist systems If one's goal is both development and institutions protecting liberty and human rights, then some form of capitalist arrangement is surely the better risk.

To encourage arrangements favourable to the private sector and private entrepreneurship does not imply focusing on the large transnational corporations as the principal agent of development, although the demonological view of these institutions does not fit the evidence and should be repudiated[11] Further, there are, admittedly, Third World countries in which encouraging the private sector is not presently practical. But even in socialist or heavily statist societies,

11 A peculiar aspect of "radical" critiques of capitalism is not only a refusal to acknowledge its achievements, but an exceptional need to deprecate them But the truth is that international capitalism has enormous achievements to its credit One example is the multinational corporation which, combining modern management with liberal trade policies, is arguably the most creative international institution of the 20th century. Not only is it an impressive enterprise for profit-making, but it is at least equally impressive in terms of its capacity to produce both goods and services and to lead to a high degree of prosperity for nearly all levels of the population. To concede this does not gainsay the fact that, like all human institutions, the multinationals share in the sinfulness of humanity, and in some situations, to a greater degree than most.

it is an illusion to think that economic activity can be entirely controlled by the political command posts. The state as such is not the bearer of development. At best, states can institute policies that leave room for development's real agents — enterprising individuals, families, clans, compadre groups, and other traditional units, as well as more modern associations like cooperatives and credit unions In other words, development is invariably the fruit of individual and small-group effort — a point rightly stressed in both the New Delhi and Bangalore documents, and one which needs to be reiterated in the face of the self-aggrandizing delusions of bureaucrats and intellectuals. Its focus should be on indigenous enterprises, many of them small and precarious, like the privately owned and operated family farm, which virtually everywhere has been an agent of successful agrarian development.

In no way, therefore, do I mean to suggest by these observations that anyone, particularly in the West, should engage in a crusade to make the world safe for democratic capitalism But we do need to scrutinize closely and critically the concrete and complex realities of both socioeconomic systems and speak openly about all we perceive, even when doing so puts us in a minority position in most international forums today and among intellectuals in many countries One of these realities, I submit, is that the socialist vision has been the grand fantasy of our age. To underpin theological reflection with a social analysis celebrating illusion and wishful thinking may appeal to "true believers" on "fideistic" grounds, but it will certainly not be productive for the enterprise of theology

Traditional Values and Mediating Structures

One of the most intractable problems of modern life concerns the fate of those institutions ("mediating structures" in sociological parlance) which stand between the individual and the state These are the carriers of meaning and identity to individuals and groups and both the New Delhi and Bangalore statements are right to stress their importance Paramount among these institutions in all societies are the family and religious community. In the Third World, other-groupings of a traditional character have to be added — clan, tribe, cast, village, ethnic and religious subcultures Superimposed on these, and existing often in symbiotic relationship with them, are a variety of modern local, social and political associations. A convincing case can be made that development strategies which ignore or run, roughshod over such mediating structures or which defy tradition at all points face great peril. Iran offers a troubling example; a countre

example, of course, is Japan where, to date, the society has successfully modernized while leaving traditional values and institutions relatively intact.

But the case should not be related (as it is explicitly in the New Delhi statement) to the adoption of socialism — an argument which will not stand up to the empirical evidence It is capitalist models which leave room for such structures, while socialist development models almost always try to suppress, regiment, or perhaps worst of all, "mobilize" them. Mobilizing people is most often urged in the context of "participation", implying that people should be the subject rather than the objects of development strategies But participation outside the framework of a democratic polity is invariably questionable Mobilization is not participation; it is usually the opposite — the regimentation of people in the service of projects to which they do not agree and over which they have no control Participation means little unless the traditional values and indigenous institutions of the people are respected by authorities or by social planners and organizers. Participation means that people have real choices and real influence or it means nothing at all

There is one last element in this mode of interpreting the Third World to which I would also give at least qualified assent· that Third World development is in the long-term interest of the industrial societies of the West This proposition is often advanced on economic grounds, reflecting the Keynesian view of economics that many in the West will not find persuasive today If Keynesian economics has not worked well within societies, one may be skeptical about its working between societies. On political grounds, however, there is much to be said for the proposition. A permanently impoverished, politically turbulent Third World cannot be in the interests of the industrial democracies of the West, and steps to forestall such a situation may be seen as an expression of self-interest It is not inappropriate to appeal to people on this basis, even in religious matters We have done so for a long time But it is a difficult enterprise, while at the same time denouncing them. In their relations with one another, spokesmen of each side will have to choose between diplomacy and evangelism; both cannot be plausibly practised at the same time.

Social Analysis and Theology: In Search of a Method

If there is a single postulate which dominates in the Third World, at least among intellectuals and politicians, it is that Third World countries have little hope of emerging from poverty unless they free themselves from their present state of dependency on rich countries.

I believe one must begin any consideration of development by assenting to this proposition. It represents a correct and crucially important definition of the situation This does not imply, as I have argued already, that one must assent to the postulate in all its forms, especially in the form given it by the Marxist-Leninist theory of imperialism, nor that affluence in the West continues to be based on Third World exploitation, nor that socialist revolutions in the Third World are the only way to remedy dependency. It is plausible, moreover, that much of the economic relations between Third World countries and the affluent "North" remains detrimental to the "South". Unfortunately, relations between economically unequal partners are almost invariably exploitative, and this has nothing to do with capitalism. A socialist country is just as capable of exploitative relations with Third World dependencies, nor are socialist Third World countries in any better condition to resist it What is clear, in either case, is that development, if it means anything, must mean a change in this relationship

The postulate about dependency is further correct in recognizing that the clue to dependency is political There are, surely, various economic policies which poor countries may undertake to improve their competitive position so they do not have to strike such unequal bargains But the assumption underneath such policies is that these countries control their own economic destinies The issue here, of course, is one of relative independence But in this relativity lies the difference between some hope and no hope at all I do not see how any doctrinaire statements can be made about the steps needed for a country to reach this political goal, everything will depend on the particular circumstances of the country itself Nor do I see how anyone can formulate a general doctrine about the economic policy to be followed once relative political sovereignty is achieved The circumstances of Third World countries are far too varied, so that every development model has only limited exportability Nevertheless, political sovereignty must be undergirded by a viable political structure, and by that I mean a government interested in developing the country in the first place (and not merely in filling its own pockets) and one which carries on policies in fact conducive to development A strong government may be a bad government In practical terms, building a viable political structure is crucially linked to forming effective intermediate social and political groups (mediating infrastructures) that pay close attention to traditional values and indigenous cultures.

Although there may be agreement on these principles as *sine qua non* conditions of development, it also needs to be stressed once again

that the strategic issues of development cannot be answered in scientific or technical terms alone There are fundamental value alternatives involved. Social analysis can clarify situations, criticize interpretations, and indicate probable consequences of certain courses of action. It can never resolve underlying value conflicts. Nor can it ever be value-free "Value-freeness" is an ideal for theoretical understanding. It does not imply that analysis is free of values or blind to the values operating in any given situation To be value-free means that one tries to perceive social reality apart from one's hopes and fears A value-free analysis of situations pertinent to development means that one tries to understand even if that understanding is contrary to one's wishes It especially means that one tries to gain a detached view of the probable consequences — including the probable unintended consequences — of one's favourite policies A social analyst may be propelled by his values in different directions He may want to advocate socialism, to search for capitalist alternatives, perhaps to discover methods that will resist modernization and preserve traditional ways of life Given favourable conditions, he may want to engage in any number of actions that foster his value commitments However, the greatest usefulness of social analysis *qua* social analysis will be the calmer business of clarification, not the more heady (and ultimately pretentious) task of "consciousness-raising" [12]

To have values means neither to see the world through glasses coloured by one's value-based wishes nor to distort or demonize the values of others In other words, neither objectivity nor fairness need be casualties of strong moral or religious commitment For this reason,

12 There are numerous problems with the term "consciousness-raising" both morally and philosophically — too many to discuss here Suffice it to say that no one is "more conscious" than anyone else, different people are conscious of different things Therefore, there is no such phenomenon as "conscientizing", unless one is reviving someone who has just been hit over the head All of us are moving around on the same level, trying to make sense of the universe and doing our best to cope with the necessities of living No one is in a position to "raise" anybody else, some of us try to convince others that our way of seeing or doing things makes more sense than theirs Such efforts may or may not be laudable, but they are, if only in principle, transactions between equals Both the moral and philosophical error lies in what might be called the hierarchical view of consciousness There is something almost medieval about this notion, rooted perhaps in the old scholastic notion of the "chain of being" One may wonder about the ethnographic data on which assertions of higher consciousness are based But there is no ambiguity about its programmatic implications It is difficult to imagine a more "elitist", or for that matter, more paternalistic concept than one based on the assumption that a certain group of people is dehumanized to the point of animality, is unable either to perceive this condition or to remedy itself from it, and requires the (presumably selfless) assistance of others for the perception and the rescue operation This peculiar mixture of arrogance ("I know the truth") and benevolence ("I want to save you", or in more current parlance, "I want to help you save yourself") represents a kind of cognitive imperialism that might be psychologically appropriate for a certain type of missionary activity, but has no place in contemporary discussions of development

in comparing different strategies for social change it is a good rule to compare the best rather than the worst instances of a particular design It is not valid, either intellectually or morally, to base a critique of capitalism on the worst cases of dislocations caused in the Third World today by capitalist penetration It is equally invalid to make the socialist alternative bear the full burden of the numberless victims of Maoist terror Nor is it acceptable to the culture of various Third World countries and the West, no matter how different they may be, to legitimate the sudden collapse of their critical faculties Critique, therefore, is never enough The corrective must always be added of a critique of the critique, and the readiness to remain open-minded in both intellectual operations

To be critical, consequently, implies the quality of being able not only to criticize the *status quo*, but of doing so on an impartial basis. The foremost intellectual weakness of Marxist "critical theory" has been its general failure to provide tools for a critique of itself or of any socialist *status quo* it only allows prophets and martyrs for the revolution, not against it Only when "critical" is understood in a sense that is, in principle, universal in applicability will it be possible for sociologists and theologians of different value preferences or ideological persuasions to engage in meaningful discourse More importantly, only a critical analysis that can include within it a critique of all empirically available models of development will have ultility and religious relevance Such an approach will be sober in its assessment of both the gains and costs of different models It will not be blinded by the labels "capitalism" or "socialism", or waste energy on futile discussion of when the adjective "true" may be prefixed to either label It will be more interested in the questions, "What kind of capitalism ?", "What kind of socialism ?" This approach will not only signal a growth in "ecumenical" tolerance, but make it possible to think about development in categories that go beyond the capitalist/socialist dichotomy

These observations, as well as those in the preceding pages, touch on matters broader than the New Delhi and Bangalore statements My interest in these two documents, in fact, lies precisely in the way they serve to focus attention on deeper and more complex development issues which are, after all, among the most important in the world today These latter, in turn, provide a particular "case study" of the more general dialogue between sociology and theology If that dialogue is to continue and if the social analysis of Third World theologians is to be rendered more credible, then sociologists and theologians from both "South" and "North" need to join together

in searching for a *method* of bringing ethical and religious considerations critically and systematically to bear on theological reflection and action No such method has yet been devised By method, I mean a quest for something less elegant than a comprehensive theory or a set of universally applicable principles, but something which respects both the objective detachment and moral engagement required. A method is an avenue of inquiry, a way of approaching problems, a *modus operandi* It is, almost by definition, open-minded, always subject to revision These qualities do not detract from its importance, but safeguard against rigidity in thought or practice

Whatever its formal articulation, it should be a method that seeks new approaches to situations of political relevance, cutting acrosst he ideological dividing lines — not ignoring the contradictions among different interpretations, but remaining at all times neutral with regard to them I presuppose a stance of soberness, an intellectual if not personal modesty, as well as a sense of the irony of history and of the burdens of power In this effort, we cannot do without the intellectual discipline so passionately advocated by Max Weber. Nor can we do without utopian images We badly need individuals capable of both, who can bear the tension this entails

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small ecclesial groups and foster their multiplication", without restricting their freedom and initiative (n 118) For these groups play the "catalyst role" of leading the whole Church to a new awareness of her mission to struggle for a new society (n 119).

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The Conclusion of the entire document is another pressing call to "forge ahead, struggling with the people for full humanity" (n. 120) It would be ungracious, in concluding this survey of the Statement and the observations made on it, not to express one's thanks for it. No doubt, some of its assumptions are open to criticism and some of its assertions in need of refining, a more sober style would, moreover, have finally proved more convincing Yet, in spite of its defects, the Statement — and the Seminar which led to it — will hopefully help the Church in India to awaken to what is an indispensable dimension of her mission and a pressing task. I say 'hopefully", because a real commitment of the Church at large to engage in the struggle for a new society does not easily follow upon a Statement made by enthusiastic participants at a Research Seminar The Document expresses the wish of the participants "to share with the Catholic Church in India the results of their research", they offer it in particular to some specific groups, among whom are listed "all our bishops". They hope that the document will arouse discussion and serve as a stimulus for action (n. 8). May this hope not be frustrated.

The Indian Church in the Struggle for a New Society

J DUPUIS, S J

A RESEARCH Seminar under this title took place at the National Biblical, Catechetical and Liturgical Centre, Bangalore, from 19th to 24th October, 1981 Other national Research Seminars had preceded it, on "Non-Biblical Scriptures" (1974) and "Ministries in the Church in India" (1976) The list of topics shows a determination to study in depth the burning pastoral issues that arise for the Church in India from her present situation and her renewed self-awareness Among them, the issue studied in last year's Seminar is probably the most topical and urgent, dealing as it does directly with the Church's mission to the world and society

The origin of the Seminar is somewhat complex The Research Project originated in a convergence of concerns of various agencies The IV All-India Biblical Consultation, held in December 1980, expressed the conviction that a new thrust should be given to the Biblical apostolate, centred on the Kingdom of God and its implications for society Around the same time the CBCI Commission for Labour decided to initiate a study on the same theme, especially geared to problems of justice The Catholic Biblical Association of India shared the same concern and wanted to respond to the same need Meeting at NBCLC, the three agencies decided to undertake a common project, the coordination and organization of which was entrusted to the director of the National Centre The project went through several stages of study and culminated in the Research Seminar held last year in October. There were 95 participants, representing all the sections of the Church Much credit is due to Fr D S Amalorpavadass, not only for the efficiency with which the Seminar was conducted, but also for the speedy publication of all its proceedings As early as last December a volume of 1100 pages was published in Bangalore [1]

The bulk of the volume consists of 46 Research Papers grouped under 5 headings "Socio-political and Historical Studies on the Church in India" (7), "Indology" (9), "Liturgy, Spirituality, Theology and Catechetics" (11), "Biblical Studies on the Concepts and Evolution of Society" (13); "Study of the Documents of the Church's Magisterium" (6) These cover 800 pages of the volume It may immediately be observed that among the various disciplines Bible Studies, Sociology and Indology are strongly represented in these studies Except for the studies of the Church's official social doctrine, theology

1 *The Indian Church in the Struggle for a New Society* Edited by D S AMALORPAVADASS Bangalore, National Biblical, Catechetical and Liturgical Centre, 1981. Pp 1104 Rs 50.

proper is clearly the poor parent, this discipline was in effect a late entry This is perhaps explained by the genesis of the Seminar mentioned above, but has not been without drawbacks as will become clear hereafter.

The Seminar proceeded in three stages discipline-wise study of the theme, inter-disciplinary study of major issues, and pluri-disciplinary synthesis and conclusions in the form of a Final Statement The report of the discipline-wise and inter-disciplinary workshops are printed in the volume, as well as the Seminar's conclusions

I do not intend to review here this enormous material I will be satisfied with surveying the Final Statement, while at the same time making some comments and offering some critical remarks This way of proceeding seems justified by the Statement itself where it is stated "In this Statement a synthesis of the Research Papers and the Workshop Reports is offered" (n 8)

The Statement itself is a very lengthy document covering no less than 37 pages in print It represents an enormous amount of work done under great pressure An idea of this may be gathered from the fact that the mere reading of the drafted document in full assembly on the last day of the Seminar took well over three hours Was it too ambitious to attempt such a comprehensive document ? The fact is that the draft was unequal and that, while some parts required only few amendments, others, especially that on the Mission of the Church, went through substantial corrections and additions, previous to being voted The outcome is a document, somewhat unwieldy and repetitious, parts of which would have deserved longer discussion had time permitted, it nevertheless succeeds in recapturing the mood of the assembly and to express the thrust of its thinking

The Final Statement is divided into four parts I Socio-Cultural Analysis of the Crisis in India Today, II Vision of the New Society, III Orientations from the Teaching of the Church, IV The Mission of the Church

I. Socio-Cultural Analysis of the Crisis in India Today

The first part does not only provide a social analysis of the present situation in Indian Society and of its causes, it also shows the challenge for change that arises from Indian culture and religious traditions This part begins with a shocking description of the present situation

> Of the 690 million inhabitants in India today some 297 millions live on or just above the 'poverty line' (defined by the Central Government Pay Commission as "the minimum required diet for moderate activity"), while some 300 millions are below this line, unable to obtain even the minimum required for human survival, only about 80 millions are adequately clothed, fed and housed A further 13 million people are rich enough to enjoy an abundance of the luxuries of the consumer society (n 11)

This situation, the Document states, is due to the unjust structure of society, of which it analyses the causes, grouping them under two categories historical and structural. "One of the main causes for

this unjust structure of Indian society is *colonialism*" (n 13a) This is illustrated by the deep transformation brought about by the British system the self-sufficient traditional economy of rural India was transformed into a national and world economy Under the structural causes are mentioned "the in-built mechanisms of exploitation of the poor masses by the rich elite within the country" (n 13b), and the mechanisms of domination of the poor countries by the rich countries, called "*neo-colonialism*" (n 14) Going to the root-cause of the unjust structures of Indian society, the document finds it in "the economic system of production, consumption and distribution called the *capitalist* economic system" (n 17) It describes the in-built mechanisms and values of the capitalist system It then shows how these values aggressively confront the prevailing human values of the Indian ethos While it admits that in the recent past capitalist forces have found a natural ally in the traditional feudal order, reinforced by the caste system, yet "the feudal-capitalist-reactionary alliance does find a challenge from the on-going Indian tradition, however weak this may appear at present Underlying this challenge are elements that can constitute a nucleus for an Indian vision of a New Society' (n 23)

Analysing these elements, the document sums them up in terms of an "integral humanism" and a "holistic approach" (nn 24-25) It sees those values operative in the traditional village communities of pre-colonial times and rejoices that they have remained operative even today in tribal areas which have been spared the inroads of modern culture It concludes "Though industrialization and urbanization are playing havoc with the simple ideal of community life, one may wonder whether a suitably modified form of this ideal may not be worth pursuing even today" (n 27) That the ideal is not merely utopian is shown by the fact that many modern reformers were animated by it Tagore, Gandhi, Aurobindo, and J P Narayan are examples (n 29)

Confronting the traditional values of Indian society with those introduced into it by the capitalist system leads the Statement to reject a concept of social analysis in which values and religious beliefs are viewed merely as legitimising the economic system This important paragraph is worth quoting

> Such a holistic perspective demands from us a closer look at the ideological pre-suppositions lying behind certain tools for social analysis In the first place we have to see in culture (including values and religious beliefs) not merely the mechanism of legitimizing the economic system, but also another pole that keeps challenging current structures and proposing a vision for a new society Secondly, this bi-polar cultural reality enters into a spiral-dialectical movement with the economic-political reality that makes transformation possible, so that we do not make culture and religion purely and simply depend on economics as its super-structure (n 30)

II. *Vision of the New Society*

The New Society which is called for is one where "the person in community will have primacy" (n 31), it will foster a "humanism of

communion" The second part of the Document asks whether the biblical vision, both in the Old and New Testaments, offers inspiration and orientation for such a society "The Bible does not give a clear blue-print or a programme of action for the realization of an ideal society, valid for all times and places, but it provides a vision that has to be interpreted and implemented in the concrete Indian situation of an oppressed and exploited people, struggling to overcome unjust structures that enslave and dehumanize them" (n 33)

At the centre of the Biblical vision are the Covenant and the Kingdom of God The Old Testament is dominated by the Exodus-event, the paradigm of God's liberating action (n 34), and the awareness of the Covenant made by God with his people (n 35) The Document brings out their social dimension It goes on to show that the socio-political structures inspired by God were meant to maintain the ideal society envisaged by the Covenant (n 37) When in the course of time these became oppressive and self-perpetuating, God intervened through the prophets, denouncing injustice and calling for radical change (n 37) The history of Israel is that of God's entreaty to his people to observe the Covenant and its social demands, it is also the story of those demands ever going unheeded, till finally "prophecy gave way to apocalyptics" "an intervention of Yahweh will put an end to this corrupt world and create a new heaven and a new earth" (n 38) "In this new society there will be no exploitation and oppression, no more hunger and slavery People will no more be divided into castes and classes It will be a universal community of happy and prosperous people The Fatherhood of God and the fellowship of people will be the only guiding norm in society" (n 39)

Jesus entered the scene, preaching the Kingdom of God, at a time when this inspiring hope and vision, if kept alive, seemed infinitely remote (n 40) Yet to a desperate and despondent, oppressed and despised people he proclaimed that the Kingdom of God had come upon them Jesus conceived his mission as that of the eschatological prophet (n 41) He unambiguously opted for the oppressed, challenging unjust structures His miracles were signs of the breaking-through of the Kingdom in a world of misery "Jesus went to the root-cause of evils in society, unmasking and denouncing them" (n 42) He denounced the oppressive economic (n 43) and political systems (n 44), the inhuman social, religious and legal structures (n 45) Jesus' options and actions were seen as subversive by the political and religious authorities Death was "the price Jesus had to pay for his radical option, at the same time it is the supreme manifestation of God's love for his people God vindicated his Son and his option by raising him from death, making him the first-born of all who risk their lives for justice in the name of God and his people" (n 46) The Kingdom Jesus proclaimed is "essentially a fellowship and communion among people who accept the reign of God and its demands" (n. 47). A radical option for justice, equality and freedom is the necessary condition for belonging to it (n 47) After Jesus, the community of the apostles, first enclosed within Jewish traditions but soon breaking through them to open up to a universal mission, continued his mission (n 48) The local communities of disciples founded by the apostles

considered themselves "concrete manifestations of the Kingdom of God" (n 49), at the service of the world to herald and hasten the full realization of the Kingdom (n 50)

At this stage, the Statement, somewhat unexpectedly, returns to the Indian religious traditions to show how the hope for the Kingdom is embodied in them This section, entitled "The Indian Quest for a New Society", describes briefly the historical development of this hope (n 51) in the popular religious traditions and the Vedic period of the Hindu tradition (n 52), in the myths of the *puranas* and the epics (n 54), in the bhakti tradition, especially the Bhagavad-Gita (n. 55), in the movements for social reform and political independence during the last hundred years (n 57) The Kingdom hoped for is always seen as one of righteousness (*dharma*), "ushering in an era of peace and prosperity, justice and brotherhood" (n 59)

Here the document anticipates a possible objection "One might wonder whether we can speak of this thread of hope for a new society in terms of the 'Kingdom' " It answers it, first by pointing out that the symbol of kingship and Kingdom is not absent in the Indian tradition More to the point it adds "We do not think that anyone would hesitate today to read the history of the world and therefore the history of India as the history of God's saving action in the world Hence there should be no misgivings when we speak of the Indian quest for the 'Kingdom " (n 58) Whether or not everybody will enter into this perspective, it seems theologically justified and falls into line with the conclusions of the 1974 Research Seminar on Non-Biblical Scriptures which recognized the marks of divine revelation in the Sacred Scriptures of other religious traditions Nevertheless, the question may be asked and it was asked on the floor on the last day of the Seminar during the discussion of the draft statement — whether this entire section on the hope for the Kingdom in the Indian tradition should not preferably have been linked to the elements for an Indian vision of a new society described in the first part Were not those already expressions of the same hope ? Linking them together would perhaps have been more convincing; it would also have simplified the structure of the document

III. Orientations from the Teaching of the Church

Turning to the social documents of the Church's magisterium in recent times, the Statement begins by regretting that they often came late and so lost much of their impact, that furthermore they were not made widely known and much less implemented (n 62) This is all the more to be regretted because they raise issues of vital concern for people in India The document points to some of those issues specifically, applying them to the Indian situation 1 The Church's teaching definitely gives priority to labour over capital, hence its condemnation of unchecked liberal capitalism (n 63), 2 There is in the more recent documents of the Magisterium a clear shift in the understanding of private ownership, the emphasis shifting from the individual to the social destination of goods (n 64), 3 The Church has, belatedly, made its own the United Nations' Declaration of Human Rights (n 65),

4. The Church today begins to perceive the need to join hands with groups working for the renewal of society, even though much waverin remains with regard to socialism (n. 66); 5. The Church documents stress the need to redress the imbalance suffered by the agricultural sector from the process of industrialization (n. 67) Through these and other concerns the Church "begins to discover, even if timidly, its new responsibilities towards society as an integral part of her mission" The roots of injustices are no longer traced only to individual sinfulness but to unjust structures The Church is also "compelled to examine the sinful situations in her own unjust structures" (n 68).

IV. The Mission of the Church

The fourth part of the Document is by far the longest. Its structure, however, is somewhat complex and its contents, partly for the reason already explained, not fully satisfactory As would be expected, the introduction to this part states in general terms the mission of the Church in the quest for a new society "The Church is to continue the mission of Jesus in whom the Kingdom of God broke through into the world" This Kingdom consists in "the ordering of human society according to God's rule To this the Church must witness, of this she must be a sign and instrument" Both within herself and in society the Church must promote the Kingdom values of freedom, fellowship and justice "The struggle for a New Society is therefore a constitutive element of the Church's evangelizing mission" (n 72) Thereby the Document makes its own and applies to the quest for a new society the weighty, often quoted, pronouncement of the Synod of Bishops in Rome, 1971

> Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a *constitutive* dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation [2]

Still in general terms the Statement goes on to explain what the specific contribution of the Church to the new society should be· it will consist in "inserting the values of the Gospel into human relationships, personal and structural". Negatively this will mean denouncing whatever structures militate against those values, positively it will mean joining with all people of good will to promote them This is all beyond reproach, but the introduction concludes, somewhat bombastically "All humankind is the Church's arena and the New Society is her agenda" (n 73). This triumphalistic language hardly represents the newly, if painfully, acquired self-awareness of the Church of being the leaven that must be concealed, a little flock at the service of the world A more theological statement of the relationship between Church and world would have been in order.

In fact we touch here on the Document's main deficiency and short-coming: it contains no theological articulation of the Church's mission to society. Kingdom, world, history, Church, society — all

2 Quoted in NEUNER-DUPUIS, *The Christian Faith*, n 2159.

run through the document without their mutual relationships being ever clearly spelled out. What is the relationship of society to the Kingdom, of history to eschatology, of the Church to the world, of the Church to the Kingdom ? It must be regretted that no research papers were devoted to these difficult theological issues and that the theological workshop overlooked them. Without such articulation the Church's mission in the quest for a new society cannot be accurately defined, and much of what the Statement says lacks its final theological justification

After this short theological introduction, the fourth part of the Document on the Mission of the Church falls under five headings Areas of Struggle, Ministries, The Role of Various Sections in the Church, Basic Requirements, New Theology and Structures; People's Movements and Grassroot Level Action Groups.

A *Areas of Concern*

The Church must discern the main issues which affect society and fix an order of priority among them. Among the many core-issues with which the Church ought to be concerned, and of which the Document provides a long list, it isolates some for special consideration: land reform (n 75), child labour (n 76), bonded labour (n 77), the caste system (n 78), discrimination against tribals (n 79), educational institutions (n 80), world structures and international justice (n 81) For each of these the Document indicates the direction which the Church's involvement should take, for instance, with regard to the Church's educational work, personnel should be freed for non-formal education and existing institutions should be geared to the promotion of justice (n 80)

B. *Ministries of the Church*

The thrust for a new society should pervade all the Church's ministries: the ministry of the word, of worship, of formation, guidance and service (n 82). The Word of God must be related to concrete situations and these interpreted in its light (n 83) The liturgy, and especially the Eucharist, if properly used, has a rich potential for sensitizing people to social issues "Every celebration should be appropriate to the particular historical situation in which a celebrating community finds itself .. The whole eucharistic celebration should breathe our involvement in the struggle to heal all broken persons and to break the structures that are responsible for it" (n 84) As for concern and service, while in no way detracting from the need for and merit of relief and welfare work, the Document unambiguously states that such work cannot be by itself an adequate response It only "takes care of the victims of an unjust system", "probing into the causes of injustice and trying to eliminate them would be a more effective response" (n. 85). The Statement suggests that the "piecemeal approach of acts of mercy and charity to serious social evils", still prevalent in the Church's action, is due to the mind-set of many Church people for whom "compassionate capitalism" remains the ideal to which their own life-style is conformed (n. 86).

C. The Role of Various Sections in the Church

Though the tasks just mentioned are common to the whole Church, each section of it is called to play its specific role (n. 87) It is interesting to note that this part of the document has been completely inverted as a result of the discussion on the floor on the last day of the Seminar. The draft treated the various sections in this order: the hierarchy (bishops and priests), the laity, the religious, women religious. The sequence in the final document is the following: the laity, youth, women, the religious, women religious, men religious, priests, bishops, the hierarchy (at national and international levels). The inversion shows that a male prejudice has been overcome, more importantly, from a theological view-point, it translates into concrete and consistent terms the new perspective brought about by the Constitution *Lumen Gentium* but which the Council failed to follow up to its last consequences It is a well known fact that the introduction in the Constitution of an early chapter on the People of God has changed the perspective of the ecclesiology of the Council, to follow this up, however, would have required that the new chapter be immediately followed by that on the laity, the role of the hierarchy being treated thereafter. The Council did not do this, the Bangalore Seminar did, though at a late stage. The reversal of perspective was, of course, especially in order here, given the topic of the Seminar Only the new perspective could put into full relief the direct and special responsibility of the laity for inserting the Gospel values into society It is not surprising that the laity's role was inadequately spelt out in the draft, the new perspective prompted lay participants to request that it be more clearly expressed To stress the laity's role in the Church's quest for a new society was essential in order that the specific role of the priestly ministry itself be viewed in the correct perspective. Only then can we avoid a clerical approach, to which we remain only too prone, as though priests and religious had the monopoly of the Church's evangelizing mission, and in it of being at the service of society.

Starting then with the role of the *laity*, the Statement clearly assigns to them a special responsibility in the quest for a new society, this special role directly flows from the Vatican II theology of the laity to whom "the renewal of the temporal order (belongs) as their own special obligation" (*AA*, n 7) They are called not only to be involved in the struggle as individual persons, but also to form militant groups and to take a public stand on burning issues (n 88). Furthermore: "Lay people are involved in this struggle not as helpers of the hierarchy, but in their own right, as the secular sphere is primarily their responsibility and competence." As Vatican II has recognized the legitimate autonomy of the secular sphere, so must the Church acknowledge the legitimate autonomy of the laity's operation in that sphere (n. 89). Not only the legitimate autonomy, but also the laity's responsibility and competence calls for full recognition on the part of the Church. Structural changes are called for in the Church to give expression to the laity's co-responsibility and overcome clerical domination Formation programmes should be organized to equip the laity for the

liberation mission laid upon them by their status as baptized and confirmed Christians (n. 90)

The Statement lays special emphasis on the role of the *youth*, "the most powerful segment of society", the most thirsty for justice and the best prepared to engage in liberation action. "The Church in India has not yet sufficiently recognized youth power." Youth movements must be organized and geared to social justice and effective social action (n. 91)

Coming to *Women*, the Statement notes that "centuries of exclusively male-dominated Indian tradition have marginalized the Indian woman and relegated her to the status of a non-person" Women are engaged in a double struggle, against poverty and exploitation by men The Church should condemn all atrocities and injustices perpetrated against women Women should be trained to take their rightful place in society and the Church Their services will be of special value in primary education and primary health care. The Church, moreover, should "initiate and support various liberation groups led by women themselves" (n 92)

In virtue of their vocation to "embody the eschatological dimension of the Kingdom and the radicality of the Gospel", the *religious* are to be in the vanguard in embodying and ushering in the new society By their calling they are committed to a community of fellowship that strives for God's justice in the world (n 93) *Women religious* make up a vast human potential in the Indian Church If they are to play their prophetic role in the struggle for a new society, a genuine renewal is needed, leading to an unambiguous option for the poor, in particular their action should in much greater proportion be directed to the rural areas (n 94) As for *men religious*, namely religious brothers, they too have a prophetic role to play in opting for the poor as a radical evangelical group among the laity, always emphasizing the God-dimension in the quest for a new society (n 95)

I have earlier stressed the need to give to the laity their rightful place in order that the specific role of the *priestly ministry* be viewed in right perspective It is a known fact that during his apostolic journeys, in Latin America especially, Pope John Paul II made this point strongly, with special reference to the promotion of justice and the building up of a new society He made it again while addressing the fifth plenary assembly of the Pontifical Council of the Laity on 5th October 1981 "At the heart of the situations and problems on which man's future depends", he said, "the laity must be the witnesses of a new humanity " He went on expressing the hope that thereby "there may be left behind a certain distorted view of the priesthood which dims the sense of the pastoral ministry, when the priest succombs to the temptation of becoming a leader on the political, trade-union or social plane "[3] And, addressing the Jesuit Provincial Superiors in Rome on 27th February 1982, the Pope said:

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3. *Osservatore Romano*, English Edition, 19 October 1981, p. 4.

The Second Vatican Council has already clarified the apostolate of the laity and has exhorted them to play their part in the Church's mission, the role of priests and religious is different They are not meant to take the place of the laity still less should they neglect the duty that is specifically theirs [4]

Having strongly affirmed the laity's specific task, the Statement of the Seminar was in a position to place the priestly ministry in right perspective It defines the priest's specific function as "unifying spiritual leadership" at the service of the community It may be regretted that much of what is said here, being taken over from the Conclusions of the Research Seminar on Ministries in the Church in India (1976),[5] is not directly focussed on the quest for a just society More appropriate, however, is the remark that involvement with communities struggling for liberation "is in keeping with the specific role of the presbyteral ministry of unifying spiritual leadership" It will be the priest's role to "animate the struggles with a Christian vision and dynamism, not from outside but from within the groups, in identification with them and sharing in the very process" (n. 96) The delicate question of the priest's direct involvement in politics by way of substitution for the laity or in extraordinary circumstances is not touched upon, presumably because it is not a real issue in the Indian Church Unfortunately, the Document has nothing to sav about the permanent diaconate, evea though the Conclusions of the above-mentioned Seminar on Ministries had depened the specific role of the permanent diaconate as pledging and embodying "the Church's our commitment to the urgent task of the building up of a new society" (Conclusions, n 70). The absence of any reference to the diaconate in the context of the present Seminar is a serious oversight

Of the *bishops* in their dioceses, who are "servant-leaders journeying with the community" the Statement expects that they be present with their people in their struggle, more specifically that they "support and encourage" action-groups at the grass-roots (n 97) To the hierarchy at national and international levels a role is assigned in the most general terms for the transformation of social structures (n 98). Nothing specific, however, is said here, not even that it is the duty of the local hierarchy, as spokesmen of the local Church, to denounce unjust structures of society and breaches of human rights, wherever these are found and whatever the religious affiliation of the people oppressed by them [6]

D *Basic Requirements New Theology and Structures*

This section begins with a clarion call to the Church to enter the struggle for a new society Its wording, however, is somewhat unhappy, jarring as it does with much that has gone before In previous sections the Church — and the various sections of her members — has been castigated for not espousing the cause of the

4 *Osservatore Romano*, English Edition, 15 March 1982, p 12

5 See D S AMALORPAVADASS (ed), *Ministries in the Church in India*, Bangalore, NBCLC, 1976, pp 534-537

6 An allusion was made to this earlier in the document, though with no direct reference to the local hierarchy It is found in the section on "Areas of Struggle" (n. 74), where it is somewhat out of place

poor and the oppressed. Now the Statement declares in the indicative: "She (the Church) opts for the cause of the poor and the downtrodden .., inspired by Jesus Christ who opted to liberate the oppressed" (n. 99); "the Church identifies herself in life-style with the marginalized and voiceless, becomes their voice and makes their struggle their own Whatever resources she has are spent in large proportion to sustain their struggle, i e , to conscientize, mobilize and organize the masses and to struggle with them for a radical change of society" (n 100) All this, presumably, is laid down as a programme, or a description of what the Seminar envisages to be the ideal Church, not as a description of the present reality. Regret of past failures and a sense of *metanoia* would, however, have been more in order than this manifesto. Soberness and humility are more credible than big words by which we often deceive ourselves For who is the Church described here or speaking here ? The term "Church", it must be admitted, is nowadays often used equivocally Thus, the report of a workshop on "A Historical Socio-Political View-Point" unashamedly states, with reference to the workshop group "The Church assembled here at NBCLC on the night of the 20th of October, 1981, yearns for the birth of a NEW Church" (p. 1006)!

The section now passes on to *theology* as "faith reflection that arises from the struggle with and for the poor" (n. 101) The Statement calls for an Indian Theology of Liberation born of the double encounter of faith, with reality on the one hand and, on the other, with other faiths and ideologies (n 102) Such a theology would be "holistic, experiential and concrete" (n 103) In particular, socialism must be de-linked from atheism "A critical dialogue and collaboration with Marxist movements on issues of common concern and commitment is not excluded " It need not on our side imply the uncritical acceptance of Marxist ideologies, while on their side the suspicion must be overcome that Christians are essentially linked with vested interests "The need for dialogue is obvious" (n 104) Coming then to the analytical approach required to study the causes of structural injustice, the Statement takes a definite stand with regard to Marxist analysis. Its posture here links with what has been said earlier on the components of culture (cf. n. 30, above):

> The Marxist analysis as a whole — which according to the Marxists themselves cannot be separated from a Marxist world-view — is unacceptable to us as a holistic interpretation of reality, however valuable and valid a number of insights it offers may be This does not, however, give us any right whatsoever to cast suspicion on or brand as communists those who use them, and still less to question their commitment to justice and the cause of the poor The whole discussion on the validity and legitimacy of the Marxist tools of analysis shows the importance of an interdisciplinary approach to the interpretation of reality (n 105)

Touching on the legitimacy or non-legitimacy of violence in the struggle for a new society the Statement remarks that the Gandhian ideal of "*ahimsa* does not simply mean non-violence but rather respect and concern for life In the interest of fuller life a certain violence and suffering may be unavoidable as in the case of surgery... The decision for or against violence in a given situation of injustice is not

a logical conclusion from abstract and general principles, but a religious discernment based on a holistic approach to reality" (n 106).

After theology, *Church structures.* The present pyramidal structures, the Statement says, "prevent the Church from an authentic participation in the world's struggle for a new society" "The accumulation of all power in the hands of a few facilitates domination, tending to stifle all initiatives from below. As long as these feudal structures continue, the institution of different consultative bodies .. in the wake of Vatican II seems a mere palliative" (n. 107) "As the early Christian communities, guided by the Spirit, created the structures and *ministries that best promoted Christian discipleship and their* liberating mission", so should Christian communities and local Churches today "be free to create the structures and ministries that best facilitate their evangelical thrust" Christian groups "really involved in the struggle for a new society are the proper milieu for such creativity" (n 108) This call for new Church and ministry structures, which is taken over from the Seminar on "Ministries in the Church in India" (1976), is legitimate to a great extent It would, however, have been theologically helpful — be it only to dispel misunderstandings — to distinguish the man-made (and changeable) *structures* from the fundamental *structure* of the Church, already found in the apostolic Church and understood by it as *interpreting the will of Christ* Advocating participation of the people in decision-making (n 110) is to respond to an urgent need, though it is naive to think that decisions will normally be based on consensus in the community Nor should the plea be founded on fallacious arguments, as when it is said that "in the early Church all major decisions were taken by the community of disciples" (n 108) The Acts of the Apostles testify to the fact that at the so-called Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15), the decision was taken by "those in authority" (cf Gal 2, 6) And Paul, for one, was aware of personally exercising authority over the Churches founded by him when, for instance, he wrote "To anyone who might want to argue, it is not the custom with us nor in the Churches of God" (1 Cor 11, 16)[1]

E *People's Movements and Grass-root Level Action Groups*

The Church, the Statement says, must "identify genuine people's movements and enter into a critical collaboration with them" (n 111). Her refusal to do this in the past is to be attributed to her "vested interests in the status-quo" "This mistake of history should not be repeated" (n 113) The Church must collaborate with people of *other religious traditions and ideologies in view of the transformation* of society" (n 114). In particular, the Church can strengthen the people's movements through non-formal or adult education, aimed at conscientization and organization of the voiceless masses (n. 115). She must support and encourage the grass-root action groups which have emerged in recent years, as they try to put into practice the Christian vision of community and to promote Gospel values in society (n. 116) Far from keeping them marginalized because of their prophetic stand (n. 117), the Church "should really stand by these

Concluded on p 351

Book Reviews

Church and Society

Theology and Political Society. By Charles DAVIS *Cambridge University Press*, 1980 Pp x-196 £ 9 50

For Charles Davis Vatican II represents the end of an era rather than a new spring The traditional theology that died there was not only the "Roman" theology of classical scholasticism, but also 'modern' theology, in fact any form of orthodoxy which claims to establish a definite Christian view from whatever approach The theology of the future can only be a political theology where the theory accepts the vagaries and the incertitudes of history and therefore ceases to be dogmatic "Faith as a pattern or orientation of human action exists only in and through changing elements" (p 66) "The meanings, which thus constitute faith as a way of life and are articulated as beliefs, are subject to change" (ibid) Knowledge as contemplation is no longer valid, but only knowledge in its dimension of action on society And yet he dismisses Metz as being vague and not quite logical, and hardly refers at all to Latin American theology In the second half of these Hulsean Lectures at the University of Cambridge his main interlocutor is the Frankfurt school of New-Marxism (Adorno, Horckheimer and specially Habermas) The dialogue is therefore largely North European and fairly academic and only those acquainted with the thought of Marxist theory will easily follow the book Davis is quite sensitive to the modern mood of Christians, especially in Western societies where Church affiliation if at all accepted is secondary to a more basic sense of solidarity with other Christians, and indeed potentially with all men, in the common search for the demands of faith today He has illuminating pages on religious pluralism (summarised from earlier writings) In spite of its abstract and rather philosophical language Fergus Kerr considers this book as Davis' "most important contribution so far to the reconstruction of Catholic theology" (*The Tablet*, 1980, p. 1181)

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S J

Faith, Science and the Future. Edited by Paul ABRECHT *Philadelphia, Fortress Press*, 1979 Pp iv-236 $ 3 95

The book under review is the work of a working Committee on Church and Society of the World Council of Churches The Committee has taken up the theme of a "technologically and ecologically sustainable society" for a study of its theological and ethical implications The introductory chapter enunciates the goal of a sustainable society, in terms of which science and technology must be evaluated, and the responsibility of the Churches for a just, participatory and sustainable society

The book examines in five parts five levels of concerns regarding the above-mentioned goal The first part presents a theological and ethical critique of the prevailing scientific and technological world-views, especially in the areas of biological research and nuclear energy The second level of concern is about energy for the future Here the book presents a critical reflection on the development of sustainable technologies with reference to energy sources, agriculture and industry, within the perspective of a just, participatory and sustainable society The third level of concern goes into a critique of traditional, political and economic principles, policies and systems, also in terms of the desired society A significant discussion concerns a shift from the myth of "infinite progress" to the realism of "limits to growth" The fourth level of concern examines the ethical and social issues involved in the transfer of technologies between rich and poor countries Here the book discusses technical power and people in the perspective of a participatory society The fifth level of concern relates economic issues to the struggle for a just, participatory and sustainable society

The book is a powerful plea for a new society It reflects the Christian concern for the society of the future Its chief merit consists in its clear articulation of concerns and critiques These can serve as sign-posts for human and Christian responsibility in the matter.

S AROKIASAMY, S.J.

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Editorial

While addressing the Catholic Community in Ankara on December 3rd, 1979, Pope John Paul II said "I wonder if it is not urgent, precisely today when Christians and Muslims have entered a new period of history, to recognize and develop the spiritual bonds that unite us, in order to preserve and promote together, for the benefit of all men, peace, liberty, social justice and moral values" He went on inviting his hearers "to consider every day the deep roots of faith in God in whom your Muslim fellow-citizens also believe, in order to draw from this the principle of a collaboration geared to the progress of man, to emulation in what is good, to the extension of peace and brotherhood in the free possession of the faith peculiar to each one."

This number of VIDYAJYOTI is devoted to Muslim-Christian dialogue For the Muslim believer the main stumbling-block in Christian doctrine has always been and remains even today the doctrine of the Trinity implied in the Christian profession of faith in Jesus as the Son of God Is this doctrine not in explicit contradiction with every monotheistic faith, in particular with that inherited by both religious communities from God's revelation to Abraham and Moses ? While admitting that a tritheistic representation of the Trinity always remains for us Christians a threatening danger against which we need to be on our guard, Karl RAHNER shows that, correctly understood, the doctrine deepens and enhances the monostheistic faith He does not himself initiate the dialogue with Muslim believers, but helps the prospective Christian partner of such a dialogue to reflect on the true significance of the mystery, that he might "lay no further burden" upon his hearers "beyond what is necessary" (cf Acts 18, 28)

Fr P JACKSON has introduced our readers to Sherafuddin Maneri, the great Sufi master from Bihar (cf VIDYAJYOTI 1981, pp 336-347). In a new article he places before us Sherafuddin's vision of Muhammad Though not a historical account, the Sufi's picture of the prophet of Islam reveals much of the Muslim religious ideal and ethos Fr Christian TROLL invites us to read a Mission Instruction given to members of a modern Muslim missionary movement in India Readers will be struck by the Gospel resonance of the Instruction A parallel naturally suggests itself between the high standards set forth here for Muslim missionaries and the no less demanding model proposed by Jesus to the disciples whom he sent on a mission

God's Oneness and Trinity

Karl RAHNER, S J

THE question of God's oneness is certainly one, if not the most central, of the subjects that have to be discussed in an encounter between Muslim and Christian theologians Judaism, Christianity and Islam are the three great world religions which profess a primary monotheism Christianity and Islam, both expressly follow Old-Testamental monotheism Christianity, however, in the context of an ever clearer and more reflected history of its faith and theology professes the Trinity of the one God Hence Old-Testamental monotheism and the Islamic faith ask Christianity whether the profession of the triune God is not basically a tritheism to be utterly rejected, and whether the Christian profession of monotheism is not sheer tritheism in disguise Or, if one prefers to refrain from stating it so drastically, can the Christian doctrine of the Trinity really be appropriated — religiously and logically — by a person who professes God's oneness, not only as a verbal proposition on a merely theoretical level but as the centre of his professed and lived faith ? [.]

Our question here, in other words, is this Why is it that the Christian doctrine of the Trinity does not suspend or, at least, endanger the profession of the oneness of God ? [ ]

I may be allowed to add one more preliminary remark I am not, unfortunately, an expert on Islamic theology Hence, obviously, this paper is not going to attempt an explicit comparison between Christian and Islamic theology In that case we would have to state and interpret here Islamic monotheism also, its basic doctrine and its variations in history This I certainly cannot provide I therefore can present here only a few reflections about the relationship between Christian monotheism and the Christian doctrine of the Trinity in the hope that such preliminary reflections may be of some use for a formal dialogue between Islamic and Christian monotheism We may be able to remove certain misunderstandings which render such a dialogue impossible right from the outset In doing so I have the good intention not to get lost in too abstract a terminology Rather I shall concentrate — as far as it is possible in such limited space — on the question of what is the existential and religious relevance of all the sublime and yet not

easily avoidable concepts of the doctrine of the one and triune God [.]

Meaning of Christian Monotheism

Christianity is primarily and not only secondarily a monotheistic religion. It professes the oneness of God, of the God whom the Christian adores, by whom he knows himself created and called to salvation, whom he worships in absolute obedience, faith, hope and love On the evidence of the Christian Sacred Scriptures and according to the profession of Christianity this faith in the one God is not only one doctrine among various other propositions of the Christian faith, but rather the absolutely basic dogma of Christianity In trying to understand this basic dogma one has to keep in mind that the profession of God's oneness is not primarily a metaphysical statement, even if this is necessarily implied in it We are dealing with a proposition that must be heard and professed *within* the history of salvation and revelation Christianity does not state primarily There is only one single Absolute It rather says The One who manifests himself to us, who deals with us in the history of salvation and revelation, he alone is God To him alone one can have really that relationship of absolute surrender which constitutes the essence of religion Hence, the profession of the Oneness of God is not concerned with an abstract Absolute besides which no other Absolute is conceivable Rather it refers to the God whom we experience concretely as dealing with us, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, of the prophets, the God of Jesus Thus this proposition is all but a metaphysical common-place Not only those will deny it who have not understood the principle of the necessary oneness of the Absolute or those who think it possible, in a Gnostic or Manichaean vein, to conceive of the simultaneous existence of a good and a bad Absolute, which in fact is a metaphysical absurdity The Christian belief in the oneness of God refers to a concrete Absolute and thus is far from being a self-evident truth It implies one of two possibilities (1) Either the object of all true and radical religious experience, wherever it may occur genuinely in the history of religion, is the same and, as One, holds together and legitimates all history of religion and of numinous experience (In other words· It shapes the pluriformity and apparent inconsistency of the history of religion ultimately into *one universal* history of salvation) (2) Or, this religious intentionality simply misses its object and worships not God but an idol Read in this way the statement is indeed not self-evident ' Men and women have all through history been tempted to ascribe their varied and contradictory experiences of the Numinous to different Absolutes, or to interpret

the pluralism of their religious experiences as ultimate reality, that is, to be polytheists, explicitly or in a latent, unreflected manner Or, if for some kind of metaphysical reason, they did not dare to be polytheists, they were tempted to relegate the Unity which lies behind the pluralism of religious experience and of its object to a region where this unity is, religiously speaking, of no interest to them The monotheistic religions, however (which are *not* the same as monotheistic metaphysics) say This ultimate, utterly original Unity (Oneness) which carries everything, is infinite and omnipotent It does not only dwell in a distant solitude, far away from man, but can — without its oneness being split — be pervasively present in the plural realities of this world and thus become concrete

The monotheism of Christianity and of the other two world religions has, therefore, to be conceived of as concrete and universal The concrete God whose action is manifested in a legitimate religion is as such the only and absolute God This very God is the God of all the world because of his absoluteness and oneness Because of his universal salvific will he is at work everywhere in his world The genuinely monotheistic religions have therefore either to conceive of the object of other numinous experiences and religions as related to their own concrete God, or to reject or relativize them, marking them off from theism proper Such rejection we can in fact observe in all three monotheistic world religions whenever numinous experiences are interpreted as experiences of good or evil created angelic powers If the God of religious monotheism, in spite of his infiniteness, incomprehensibility and transcendence (as Creator), is in reality the concrete God manifesting himself *where* we are without thereby splitting into a pluralism of numinous powers — then all the three monotheistic religions, each in its own way and in varying degrees of radicality, inevitably carry (speaking in Christian terms) an incarnational quality since the concreteness of God acting in history implies that he is present precisely in his unique real divinity — whether this incarnational quality, which goes with monotheism thus understood, is related to a "covenant", to a Holy Book which is truly the Book of God himself, or to a definite human person who is the presence of God.

Triune God?

Having made these short remarks concerning the meaning of Christian monotheism, we now ask Is this monotheism reconcilable with the Christian doctrine of the Trinity of God or not ? Or are these two doctrines reconcilable only by verbal tricks ? Can lived religion really integrate both these beliefs as simultaneously professed ? The basic thesis put forward in these pages intends to show that the

doctrine of the Trinity is not a mere addition to or a qualification of Christian monotheism but, on the contrary, its radicalization — on the pre-supposition, however, that this monotheism is taken seriously as based on the experience of salvation history In other words, God, in his oneness, must not be relegated to a metaphysically abstract solitude, away from the experience of the Christian faith within the history of salvation

We want this fundamental thesis to be understood in a positive, and not necessarily exclusive, way We do not stress the question whether, in the line of this thesis of the Trinity as radicalization of monotheism rather than its qualification or weakening, the *total* fulness of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity can be expressed or not This question may be left unanswered here Yet, before we concentrate on our basic thesis to explain and substantiate it, it would be appropriate to try to remove a few, however primitive, misunderstandings of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity Such misunderstandings are not only widespread outside orthodox Christianity (as well as in Unitarianism and 'liberal theologies' which profess to be Christian), they also seem, latently as it were, to make themselves felt in basically orthodox Christian theologies It is not the place here to adduce supporting evidence to this effect

We also cannot recount here the long, difficult and vicissitudinous history of the doctrine of the Trinity In so far as it is dogma proper, it has found its dogmatically binding and to-date its latest formulation at the high time of patristics The Council of Florence restated it comprehensively In high scholasticism and after, it was given profound, further interpretations which are, however, merely theology and not Christian dogma [1] We presuppose here only the official, binding teaching of the magisterium and its history We shall make a few remarks to dispel possible or real misunderstandings inside and outside Christian orthodoxy

First, I wish to state frankly that the term "person" in the doctrine of the Trinity seems to me to be misleading or in danger of being misunderstood Saying this, I do not question that this term is part of the official terminology of the Church The proposition The one God in his one essence subsists in three persons, correctly understood, is true and is a defined dogma of the faith But this does not exclude the fact that the term 'person' can be and has indeed often been misunderstood. We need to be repeatedly reminded that the history of a term used in dogmatic statements is not simply controlled nor can it in fact be simply controlled by the magisterium The actual understanding given to such a concept does not simply and solely abide

by the meaning the Church wants to give it The development of such a term takes place outside the realm of faith and as such it constantly influences the way in which the term is in fact understood in the strictly dogmatic context. And so it can happen that the utility and intelligibility of a dogmatic term be endangered or even almost obscured In this case, only difficult and cumbersome special supporting measures in favour of the term in question will be able to halt the process It seems to me that what has just been said applies today — and probably already for quite some time past as well — to the term person When the man of today, be he inside or outside the Christian faith, hears the proposition In God there exist three persons, he will automatically think of three subjects whose subjectivity, knowledge and liberty differ from one another, and he will ask himself, in a state of logical confusion, how three persons thus conceived can in fact be at the same time one and the same God

Such a contemporary, in line with the official, traditional theology of the Church, may define the term person as "subsistence of a rational nature" He is told that a multiplicity of subsistences does not necessarily imply a multiplication of the rational nature Yet he still runs the risk of conceiving the rationality of these subsistences as reproducing their plurality, in other words, he runs the risk of thinking in terms of three inter-related spiritual act-centres Or inversely If the hearer of the dogma of the Trinity overlooks those logical difficulties and more or less forgets the proposition of the oneness of the divine essence, then, when he comes to speak about the three divine persons, he conceives them as three realities with mutual relations, and these relations are then thought to be constituted in their distinctness by factors which, in reality, according to the Christian dogma of the Trinity, are *not* distinct but belong to the essence of God which is strictly identical with itself — a fact which in the prevalent conception of the three persons (under the tacit yet effective influence of the modern concept of person) is more or less forgotten We have to do here with a gross unreflected concept of three persons which latently makes its presence felt even in theology proper Taken to its ultimate conclusion, it is heterodox Such a concept of person tries to "fill" speculatively the mutual relationality which, according to the Council of Florence, constitutes the three persons In doing so it borrows, deliberately or not, from what belongs to God's essence And yet it should be clear that the essence of God and what it implies is absolutely one and unique and that this dogma of the oneness of God's essence has to be professed in radical integrity. In such a conception the persons know and love one another and speak to each other However, if one explains the differences of the three persons in the

way mentioned, one carries into their mutual relatedness God's essential realities as co-constitutive of the distinction between the persons —at least in so far as one thinks in terms of the modern concept of person. Whereas whatever in God belongs to his essence exists only in oneness, and thus cannot constitute distinctions. It is said, for instance, that there exists between the divine persons a mutual knowledge and love — a statement not to be rejected off-hand as heterodox However, one may well ask what exactly such statements are to mean if it is true that on all accounts knowledge and love belong first and foremost to the essence of God and if, furthermore, the meaning of the threefold personal relatedness in the matter is not clear For one must remember that this relationality is clearly — if only conceptually — distinct from the essentiality of knowledge and loving, and that (for instance with regard to the doctrine that the Holy Spirit is the mutual love of Father and Son) Father and Son, by possessing the divine essence, are necessarily essential love and must be viewed as one single principle

The embarassment brought about by the use of the concept of person in the doctrine of the Trinity (at least today when, unavoidably, the modern concept of person intrudes again and again) manifests itself already in the classical trinitarian doctrine from Augustine and the medieval times onwards One has to say that the Father knows himself *because* he is in possession of the original essence of God, he utters the Logos *because* he exists in his unoriginate, knowing self-possession through his essence. And yet one wants at the same time to explain that the Father knows himself in and by the fact that he utters the eternal Logos as distinct from himself We cannot follow up and explicate here this whole complex of problems. We also do not dispute that it is legitimate to refer in this context to the unfathomable mystery of the trinitarian God and thus to leave the question open without solving it logically Yet it would seem to us illegitimate to refer to the mystery simply because and in so far as the problem is posed by an indiscreet and speculatively naïve use of the concept of person. We wanted here simply to warn against an indiscriminate use of the term person in the context of trinitarian doctrine

Our warning may become clearer if we look at the matter from a different angle In the ecclesiastical doctrine of the Trinity "person" and "hypostasis" (subsistence) are used synonymously. We disregard here the fact that the hypostasis of a person signifies the subsistence of a spiritual nature (which in God is only one !). And yet, these two concepts are in fact not synonymous, neither in their historical origin nor in their use in Latin theology and the theology following upon

the formulation of the dogma The two terms carry clearly discernible connotations which mark off one from the other The concept of hypostasis has not undergone the development of the concept of person which now comes near to the modern understanding of subjectivity By virtue of this development the element of personality and subjectivity in the concept of person has become so prominent as to render the use of the term, in the context of the doctrine of the Trinity, more and more problematic This holds true with regard to the average understanding of the normal Christian, as well as in a trinitarian theology that wishes to be orthodox in the sense of not obscuring the oneness of the divine essence So one may be allowed to ask whether today the concept of the three hypostases in God (or in a slightly more modern vein: the concept of the three 'modes of subsistence' of the one God in his one essence) would not be more adequate, that is to say, more helpful in preventing popular misunderstandings of the doctrine of the Trinity as also in forestalling indiscreet speculative interpretations in ordinary Christian theology In doing so we would in no way question the legitimacy of the traditional, official terminology of the Church which speaks of three persons in God It would seem to me — if the immodesty of a single theologian may be pardoned — that the concept of hypostasis or mode of subsistence is quite suitable on the one hand to express and retain the real substance of the dogma of the Trinity and, on the other, helpful to reduce the danger of an ultimately tritheistic distortion of it But all these are perforce only very brief and clumsy indications One cannot simply adopt a rather vague, imprecise and ever changing concept of person, use it in speaking about the three divine persons in God, and then be convinced that he has understood and expressed correctly the dogma of the Trinity This warning is in sum what we had to say, and it seems to me to be of importance The Islamic theologian, too, may already know and certainly needs to know that his 'No' to a certain Christian doctrine of Trinity may well be a 'No' to a proposition which is not, after all, the true content of the Christian doctrine Even the Christian theologian does not always find it easy to dissociate himself in his own thought from the misunderstandings of a concept of person which he, all the same, uses constantly

Economic and Immanent Trinity

Let us now return more immediately and concretely to the basic thesis formulated earlier, namely that the doctrine of the Trinity is not an addition to or a modification of Christian monotheism. Setting out this time from a different starting-point, we begin with the proposition that the "economic" Trinity *is* the "immanent" Trinity and vice versa. I do not know exactly when and by whom this theological

axiom was first formulated. It seems to become generally accepted in contemporary theology and is certainly not a theological proposition which can be simply rejected as heterodox So it may be brought confidently into our theological reflections A Christian cannot seriously deny that there exists an understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity in line with the economy of salvation, and that the experience we make of the history of salvation and revelation has a threefold character In the history of revelation and salvation the Christian encounters the ineffable mystery of the unlimited and unoriginate God, named Father, who does not exist and remain in metaphysical aloofness but rather wishes, with all his incomprehensibility, sovereignty and freedom, to communicate himself to the creature as its eternal life in truth and love. This one and incromprehensible God becomes in Jesus Christ historically close to man in an unsurpassable manner Jesus Christ is not just one of the prophets within an open-ended series of prophets He rather is the irreversible and unsurpassable self-communication in history of this one God And this one and same God communicates himself to man as Holy Spirit in the innermost centre of human existence, moving him towards the salvation and consummation which is God himself Hence there exist for Christian faith two most radical, definitive and unsurpassable data, two modes of subsistence of the one God in the world They constitute the freely offered definitive salvation of the world, in history and transcendence These two abiding data must always be distinguished, even if they condition each other That there are only *two* such data, representing God himself *in* himself *for* his creation, is of course not evident right from the outset

If we could already here presuppose the teaching of the "immanent" Trinity about the two and only two intra-divine processions, the question of the exclusiveness of the two divine modes of subsistence for the world would be easy to answer Since, however, we have here first to understand the "economic" Trinity as "immanent" Trinity, the question is not so easy to answer at this point. We could however (and that may suffice here) state that distinction, unity and man's mutually conditioned historicity and transcendence offer us sufficient aid for understanding the distinction, unity and exclusiveness of the two afore-mentioned modes of subsistence of God. In this we presuppose that from the outset man is thought of as image of God and we do not forget that this image which is "man" is to be such that it can be the recipient of God's self-communication, in other words, that what is to be communicated and the recipient of the communication necessarily must correspond to one another. If, together with the unity and relationship of mutual conditioning, there exists really

a duality of divine modes of subsistence in the self-communication of God to the world, we have what is called "economic" Trinity, i e, the eternal God who communicates himself in two different modes of subsistence He must not be thought of simply in terms of a life-less identity with these two modes of subsistence, since the unity and distinction of the two modes persist and God preserves his unfathomable sovereignty in the very act of self-communication In this "economic" Trinity the eternal God who remains sovereign is called Father; in his self-communication in history he is Logos, and in his self-communication to man in his transcendence he is named Holy Spirit. (We prefer to use the New-Testamental term Logos because we want to avoid here the question whether the "Son" of the Father, who is Jesus according to the New Testament, designates already in the earliest New Testament statements — as compared to later New-Testamental texts and to magisterial pronouncements — in himself a mode of God's self-giving in the economy of salvation and thus an "immanent" mode of subsistence of God, in other words, and more radically, whether "Son" in the earliest parts of the New Testament designates the singular unity of the man Jesus with God the Father as such). There exists therefore for the Christian, without any doubt, an "economic" Trinity

It is, however, of decisive importance here to see and to profess that the duality of God's modes of subsistence does not obscure for us the subsistence of God in himself and is not mediated by something which is not God himself Logos and Holy Spirit must not be thought of as mediating modalities which are different from the one God Otherwise they would have to be thought of as created realities which like any other created reality merely carry a pointer to the always distant God, yet do not communicate God himself in his inmost reality We exclude here any Neoplatonic, Platonic or Gnostic idea of a descending, gradually self-emptying God, as being an ultimately un-Christian idea If the *self*-communication of God to his creature is understood radically, the mediation must needs be God himself, and so it cannot refer to a mediation merely of the created order Reflections like these appear remote wherever and whenever a person — say even a theistic believer — chooses to remain obediently and humbly at an infine distance from the incomprehensible God, not daring to admit that this infinite and unfathomable God is also the God of most radical nearness and immediacy, not only the Creator God infinitely distant Yet, where and whenever the thirst for God in himself, communicated to man by God himself, is allowed to make itself felt, where the ultimate, insurpassable message of revelation that God wants to give himself to man, is listened to and accepted with

radical confidence — in the way this message is lived in the experience of Jesus and his Spirit — there inevitably the statement imposes itself that there exists a twofold self-communication of God in distinction and unity and again that the two modalities of this self-communication in unity and distinction *are* God himself.

To state: The Logos and the Holy Spirit are God himself, does not weaken or obscure monotheism properly understood, but rather renders it more radical. When at the beginning we characterized religious and theological monotheism, we stated that it is not an abstract metaphysical theory concerning a distant Absolute, but an assertion that the unique Absolute is the very God with whom we deal concretely in history. The God of concrete salvation history realizes in this very history his absolute and unconditional self-communication in history and transcendence. While, on the one hand, one must not deny the distinction between the two modes of subsistence, one must not, on the other hand, place these modes of subsistence between the one God and the divinely graced creature in such a way as would finally bring about more the distance of God from his creature than his nearness to it. This would be the case if the modes of subsistence were to be conceived as merely created. We can surely think of created mediations between God and man and they do exist and have a numinous quality. Yet mediations conceived of in such a way always carry with themselves the danger of an explicit or veiled polytheism. Man, as it were, grasps such mediations, holds on to them firmly, and in so doing affirms them at least implicitly as God himself, whereas in truth they remain what they are, finite creatures which in no way can convey God himself.

Hence, in a Christian perspective, the religious monotheist can be seen to be confronted with the following alternatives:

Either he demythologizes, in a kind of theoretical monotheism, all mediations of his relationship to God (be they Word, Scripture, Sacrament, Institution, and so on) as merely creaturely. Then ultimately God is pushed at an infinite distance as the supreme godhead is in very ancient and promitive forms of religion. Since, however, concretely speaking, man still needs to cling to these particular and finite mediations of an expressly or latently polytheistic nature, such religion, in practice, becomes yet again devotion to and numinous transfiguration of the world.

Or, man takes radical monotheism seriously and yet, at the same time, refuses to conceive God's mode of subsisting in the world as divine in itself. He must then conceive it as creaturely and finite, placed, as it were, on this side of the abyss between the created world

and God In this way he, too, ends up in a kind of theoretical and abstract monotheism, letting God be God only by removing him into an infinite distance In his actual religious life he will unavoidably keep to these creaturely mediations as the only "religious" reality that he meets concretely, be it called Commandment, Scripture, Covenant or the like He will thus hover unsteadily between an abstract monotheism which fails to take seriously, in a radical fashion, the real heart of religious monotheism and a latent polytheism which in reality posits those creaturely realities as absolutes, destined to mediate God for him in spite of their being finite One could pursue the hovering between an abstract monotheism and a latent, unacknowledged polytheism right into the contemporary history of ideas up to, for instance, Holderlin, Rilke, Kerényi, Heidegger and so on Man keeps on attempting to distinguish between the divine and the gods

Or, finally, the religious monotheist, carried by God's very grace, has the confidence that the absolute God himself has come near to him unconditionally In this case, however, he must believe that the mediating modes of God's subsisting in the world are themselves divine in the strict sense of the term He must profess the following two propositions simultaneously· The one, unique God is himself near to man in two modes of subsistence in the world *and* these two modes of subsistence in the world are themselves God This irreducible, twofold statement is therefore the radicalization of a truly religious monotheism.

For the God of monotheism, properly understood, is the God -close-to-man of the history of salvation Only when the ascription to him of creaturely modes of mediation is radically denied (we are not denying that such mediations exist) does he truly remain the *one* God, who yet at the same time is *near*, who himself is present in the history of salvation. The proposition which states the identity of God's modes of subsistence in the world with God himself is only the other side of the proposition that any merely creaturely mediation between God and man removes God into an absolute distance It renders a concrete monotheism abstract and then allows man, in the concreteness of his religious life, to be a latent, unacknowledged polytheist. God has to be mediated by God himself, otherwise he remains ultimately distant and 'given' only from that distance, 'given' only through the mulitplicity and division of creaturely realities which point to a distant God That is what is affirmed by the proposition of the divinity of the two fundamental modes of God's subsistence in the world. This proposition, therefore, amounts to taking seriously a religious monotheism which is lived and conceived radically.

If at this stage of our reflections we apply the axiom, previously mentioned, of the identity of the "economic" and the "immanent" Trinity, we have exactly reached the classical Christian doctrine of the Trinity. Since the two modes of subsistence in the world of the one God are, in and inspite of their distinction, themselves God and not something different from him, namely created, they must as such belong to God eternally. In order to clearly express that they belong to God as such, they are called in the classical doctrine of the Trinity intra-divine processions. The unoriginate God (called Father) possesses from eternity the possibility of communicating himself in history, and also, in the same way, the possibility to implant himself into the innermost centre of the spiritual creature as its dynamism and destination These two eternal possibilities are pure actuality and as such, *eo ipso*, distinct from the unoriginate God. In so far as they belong to God as such — for otherwise they cannot be God himself — they can be called modes of subsistence Thus it becomes clear that the *two modes of God's subsistence in the world truly belong to God himself* and that they do not merely refer to modalities constituted by a free divine decision, and therefore inevitably belonging to the finite realm of the creaturely, not to that of God himself. For obvious reasons we cannot demonstrate here how, from this point of departure, one can *make the classical doctrine of the Trinity intelligible* *If a Christian* theologian keeps in mind the link that exists between the two "missions" and the two "processions" in God, he can hardly dispute the possibility to do so One would not need to work right from the outset with the concept of person Rather one would first arrive at the concepts of hypostasis (as distinct from person) and of modes of subsistence of the one and the same God Already earlier we have shown the problematic nature of the concept of person in the context of the doctrine of the Trinity Hence one cannot suspect the approach I have taken, simply because it does not all at once lead to a threeness of persons. In stating this we are not implying that by adopting this approach one could in no way arrive at this concept The concept of person, however, when used in this context, would need to be and to remain truly purified from any such misunderstandings as today easily attach to it. Yet all these questions can only be dealt with in a broadly developed doctrine of the Trinity, not within the confines of a short paper like this one

Conclusion

In conclusion to such a properly conceived apologetics of the doctrine of the Trinity in face of a definite monotheism, may one draw attention to a point raised already by Thomas Aquinas? We

Christians frequently speak somewhat too lightly of three divine persons, adding that each of these three is God. Thus we run the risk of being misunderstood as tritheists. In the normal logic of language, however, one can only multiply numerically what is given several times as the same and not what is different, strictly in its difference as such If one speaks therefore of three persons in God, one insinuates a concept of person which would belong to the Father, the Logos and the Spirit in strictly the same way, that is, it would be realized three times in this very sameness Yet, this contradicts the dogmatic doctrine of the Trinity For precisely in that in which Father, Logos and Spirit are equal, they are totally identical so that the same reality is given strictly only once And further, in that in which they are distinct they are radically distinct and hence cannot really be added one to another We do not want to overstress this particular difficulty in stating the Trinity but, without intending the abolition of the traditional ways of formulating the doctrine, one should keep these difficulties always in mind when attempting to talk about the mystery of the Trinity to strict monotheists. One can respect the official language of the Church concerning the classical doctrine of the Trinity and yet hold, at the same time, that to speak of "three Persons", and even of Trinity (a term absent from the New Testament !), is not absolutely necessary in order to state what Christianity really intends by this doctrine In *religious* language one could safely speak of the Father who himself is ineffably near to us in history in his Logos and within us in his Spirit One could profess that this Logos and this Spirit, much as they have to be distinguished from the Father and from one another and must not be allowed to become a dead sameness, yet are God himself and not intermediaries who would either have to be conceived as creatures or would introduce into God a kind of subordinationist process of evolution With this profession one would remain nearer to the New Testament usage and yet state expressly the substance of the Christian dogma of the Trinity One would perhaps also find it easier to preclude the misgivings of other monotheists, though these have to be challenged again and again to strive for a proper understanding of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, however imperfectly and even misleadingly it may be formulated

Our question is this: How can we formulate the dogma of the Trinity meaningfully for those beyond the confines of Christianity ? What strategy and didactic means should we adopt to render this teaching assimilable ? In this context we recommend employing unobtrusive formulations, not in order to obscure people but rather to avoid unnecessary misunderstandings. We do not want thereby to deny Christian theology the right to delve, in future also, into the

mystery of the "immanent" Trinity, in the footsteps of the speculation of the Greek Fathers, of Augustine and of medieval theology between Thomas and Richard of St Victor, provided the same theologians equally reflect on the same mystery in terms of the "economic" Trinity, with all their intellectual acumen and with all love Let them render this mystery fruitful for the religious life of Christians.

I am aware of the fact mentioned earlier that I have not really entered into dialogue with Islamic theology I have only indicated some of the problems arising within a Christian discussion on monotheism and the doctrine of the Trinity I have done so with the modest hope that it might nevertheless be of some use for the real dialogue in which Islamic and Christian theologians speak to one another about their common profession of the one and only God, and ask how it can be that this profession is not undermined or endangered by the Christian doctrine of the Trinity of the one and only God

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Sheikh Sharafuddin Maneri's Vision Of Muhammad

P. JACKSON, S J

"ONE thing is certain Jesus is the most lovable of all the prophets" These words of a Muslim friend of mine illustrate one indisputable fact. Jesus Christ is revered by Muslims. In dialogue encounters this is noted with pride by Muslim participants who then go on to express the pain they experience at the way Christians have so often referred to Muhammad. So many examples of this could be cited that it is pointless to illustrate the obvious What can be said with assurance, however, is that many Christians are now making an honest effort to get a more objective idea of the Prophet of Islam, one unencumbered by the deadweight of historical polemics Montgomery Watt's works on Muhammad could be cited as an example of this attitude at the level of orientalists who are themselves dedicated Christians

When it comes to the ordinary Christian, however, it is not so easy for him to come to a deeper appreciation of Muhammad, for this presupposes a profound grasp of Muhammad's total environment, which he normally doesn't possess He instinctively compares the little, superficial knowledge he has of him with his own knowledge of Christ and feels that Muhammad suffers by comparison

Vatican II proclaims unambiguously that "the plan of salvation also includes those (among non-Christians) who acknowledge the Creator" It goes on to say "In the first place among these are the Muslims, who, professing to hold the faith of Abraham, along with us adore the one and merciful God who, on the last day, will judge mankind".[1] Yet the Council makes no mention of Muhammad either here or in its longer reference to Muslims in the "Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to non-Christian Religions" The reason for this omission was probably that, while the 2,500 bishops gathered together had no difficulty in asserting as theologically certain that Muslims, along with Christians, adored the One True God, scarcely

1. *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, n. 16.

any of them had even gone into the question of a Christian theological evaluation of Muhammad. Hence they chose to remain silent

This silence should be seen in its historical perspective If one studies carefully what was said in the past in Christian writings about Muhammad it is clear that criticism and condemnation far outweigh appreciation and praise. The silence of Vatican II has to be seen as an invitation to Christians, in the context and light of the Church's new-found attitude of respect for Muslims, to study Islam in a more open and appreciative manner, to see how things look to eyes filled no longer with fear or mistrust, but with love

Encouraged by Vatican II, Catholic scholars are doing precisely that. More efforts are being made to understand Muhammad in his historical setting and his undoubted role in the whole history of salvation

It is *not* the purpose of this article to cast further light on the historical Muhammad. Rather, it is an attempt to convey, especially to Christians, some sense of his role in the history of salvation by seeing what he meant to a great Muslim of medieval Bihar, the renowned Sufi, Sharafuddin Ahmad ibn Yayha Maneri (*d* 1381). To be even more precise, it is a study of what the Sheikh has to say about Muhammad in his most famous work, the *Maktubat-i Sadi* (The Hundred Letters), composed in Bihar Sharif in 1346-47 A D and sent to a faithful disciple, Qazi Shamsuddin, administrator of Chausa. The letters were written as a result of the pressing requests of the Qazi who, on account of his official duties, was unable to ride the 180 kilometres to Bihar Sharif in order to be present in the Sheikh's assemblies. In writing the letters Sheikh Sharafuddin Maneri, known as *Makhdum-i Jahan* (Teacher of the World) even in his own lifetime, deliberately set out to give a full exposition of the Sufi Path as understood by him and the Firdausi Order which he established in Bihar and which still maintains its position of importance in the state. The reason for speaking of his 'vision' of Muhammad should become apparent.

The exposition seeks to examine, under several categories, what Sharafuddin has to say about Muhammad This will be followed by some reflections on the 'Muhammad' who has been presented to us.

Sharafuddin's Picture of Muhammad

Let us first look at what may be broadly classified as the *human behaviour* of Muhammad. It should be remarked here that all quotations are from the author's *Sharafuddin Maneri· The Hundred Letters* (Paulist Press, New York, 1980, and S.P.C.K., London, 1980).

"He was always the first to greet anyone" (p 207) "The Prophet used not to harbour any gold or silver coins with him overnight If anything remained, and he could not find anybody to whom to give it, he would not enter his blessed chamber until the money was expended" (p 239) "Anas Malik used to relate: 'I have served the Prophet for ten years In no work at all did he ever say, 'You have done wrong !' or, 'Why did you do that ?' When I did something well, he used to bless me Whenever I did anything that displeased him, he would say: 'The command of God is an absolute decree' " (p 239)

"He used to go home and light the lamp himself When the strap of his sandal broke, he himself repaired it He used to mend his torn garments with his very own hand He helped the servants in the house If anyone asked him to do some foolish thing, he never declined If a stranger was aggrieved with him, he did not punish him Never at all were such things as cursing, imprecation, abuse or vile language found upon his tongue He was always smiling, but with no laughter or frivolty Whenever he met a Muslim he was always the first to wish the other peace He used to sit with his companions as one of them, and he addressed them all in a respectful manner In this way, he honoured them If any of the companions or other people called him, he would reply, 'At your service !' If he was passing by some children he would wish them peace He always hid the faults of Muslims, such as when he advised a certain thief, 'Did you steel? Say, 'No !' "

"He was careful to observe the rights of his wife, children and friends according to the Law For the sake of propagating the message of Islam, he would put up with afflictions and recrimination He would not brush aside questions that might be put to him If he knew the answer, he answered immediately If not, he used to say, 'God willing, I shall find it !' Never did he show anger toward anyone He did not dissimulate, connive at evil, grow tepid in his religious observance, or keep quiet in matters concerning the divine religion Whenever his friends fell sick, he would help them If for an hour he did not see them, he would seek them out Should a servant fall ill in his own house, he would take his place and bring things from the bazaar He accepted the invitations of free men and slaves He accepted gifts, even if it were only a drop of water or a mouthful of milk Anything lawful that was brought to him, such as a hare, he would eat He never criticized whatever he was offered to eat He wore such lawful dress as was available At one time a blanket would cover him, at another time striped cloth from Yemen, at another time a woollen garment or white clothes He used to ride on whatever happened to be at hand, either a horse, camel or ass, or he would even go on foot Sometimes he went barefooted without a cloak, at other times without a turban or cap, according to what he happened to have at hand "

"He would sleep on a bare mat, using no mattress or covers Whoever turned to him in time of need — whether a servant, a free man, a slave or a slave girl — he would heed that person's request If anybody came to him in distress and it happened to be the time of prayer, he would quickly finish his prayer and then attend to his visitor and carry out the latter's request Afterwards, he would return to his prayers Whenever anyone called upon him, if he gave an order it would be to spread out his blessed cloak, saying,

'Sit here!' If the person showed any reluctance, he would politely insist, 'Kindly be seated!' And if Hasan and Husain climbed onto his back using him as a horse to ride upon, saying to him, 'O mount, go this way!' or 'Go like this!' then he would do as he was bidden" (p 240-241)

This very long excerpt is from Letter 59 "Praiseworthy Virtues". Sharafuddin claims that Abu Sa'id Khizri is his source and that all the material has been culled from collections of genuine Traditions

"If the Chosen One (Muhammad) and his companions removed infidels from his way, they did so at God's bidding" (p 275) "When a large pot of milk was brought to Muhammad, he got up, picked it up and, with his own blessed hands, distributed it to the indigent and then to the companions He himself drank only what was left over" (p 295) "It is also related that the Prophet was once seized with such emotion and clapped his hands so vigorously on account of what he heard that drops of blood appeared on his fingers" (p 390) "It is related that the Prophet was standing with a toothbrush in his mouth when Azrael arrived He said 'What do you want ? Shall I return, or should I bring forward the one commanded (i e , Muhammad himself)?' The Prophet, not bothering to remove the brush from his mouth, said 'You do your work and I'll do mine'.;" (p 200)

"When the Prophet combed out his hair, the companions used to distribute among themselves the hairs that fell" (p 270) "The Prophet said about himself· 'If I were to make friends with anyone, then it certainly would be with Abu Bakr, but I have already made friends with God ' It is not fitting for anyone to ask· 'Why did the Prophet get entangled with his wives and children ?' It is known that when he was asked who his favourite wife was, he replied, 'Aisha ' When asked who his favourite friend was, he said, 'Abu Bakr ' To this extent had human love found a place in him 'But Muhammad had already made God his Friend ' In a similar way, the Prophet was attached to his son Abraham, and wept when the child died Concerning Hasan and Husain he said 'Our offspring are as close to us as our own livers' " (p 274)

Sharafuddin, dedicated Sufi as he was, saw in Muhammad the exemplar of the whole *Sufi tradition* The Sufi path "became the Way of Muhammad and the means for conveying the wealth of Sufism to descendants of the prophets" (p 91) "Muhammad himself donned a Sufi blanket" (p 91) "He also yearned for the religious sanctuary of the Kaaba The Pride of the World set aside a special corner in his own mosque and from his companions he selected a group of about seventy people who were travelers on the Path They used to converse together, while the Arab chiefs and ordinary people

were not allowed to enter that space. When the Pride of the World bestowed great honour and dignity upon any of the companions, he would hive him his own cloak or shirt. That person would then become a Sufi. The beginning of this Way came from Adam, and its completion was found in Muhammad, the Apostle of God" (p. 91)

Some instances of the *poverty* of Muhammad are mentioned "There is a tradition that the Prophet had built a bower out of pulped reeds because when it rained he had no place to go to protect himself from the rain. Abu Bakr said: 'O Messenger of God, there is a command that we should build you a mud dwelling' He replied 'O Abu Bakr, do not sadden me with such talk! When Jesus came into the world and went where he went, he had no more than I have If Jesus, who is the forerunner of my community, had no place of refuge in the world, then how should not I, who am Lord of Both Worlds, do greater works than he, and more easily? You should understand that my delight is in this sorrow and grief'" (p. 308) "Ibn Abbas says 'The Apostle wore a woollen garment' It is related that it was made up of twelve patches, of which some were bark from the date tree" (p 377)

There was an element of *struggle* in his life "The Apostle practised so much struggle with self, during long nights and days of union, as well as on vigils, that a command came: 'O Muhammad, I did not send the Quran upon you in order that you might destroy yourself!'" (p 343). "While the mosque was being constructed, the Apostle was picking up bricks" (p 343) Sometimes he was called: "madman, sorcerer, or poet" (p 365) He had a "troubled heart" (p 149). Another trial for him was that "he could not make a rejected people into sincere believers" (p 36). "The Prophet of Islam himself has said: 'I am a man. I get angry' Indeed, they often saw signs of anger on his face The Prophet had a harem of nine wives! If anyone loses his sexual appetite he should seek treatment" (p 75) "Everything was granted him, and yet, not for the twinkling of an eye was fear removed from his heart" (p 363).

Another whole area of Muhammad's life which is of great interest is the field of *prayer*. Sharafuddin tells us that, "having discharged his apostolic functions, he would step inside the veil of his heart, close the door of existence upon himself, tie on the girdle of continence, doff the cap of prophecy and, loosening the tongue of need and helplessness, exclaim. 'O God, my sins are great! Great sinners can only find forgiveness in the Great Lord. O God, number me among the devout who have been redeemed and saved from the fire!'" (p. 363). "When the Messenger of God prayed, the water of his heart emitted

a sound like that of a bubbling cauldron" (p. 125). "Ibn Mas'ud relates that the Prophet, when he used to pray and when he would make some request, did so three times" (p. 140) "The Apostle said: 'O God, make the pangs of death bearable for Muhammad ?' " (p. 409). "The Prophet said: 'I beg for pardon seventy times a day' " (p 16). "The Prophet said: 'I seek forgiveness a hundred times a day' " (p. 133) "All would cry out saying, 'What has happened ?' They would be told. 'Muhammad, the Apostle of God, is pleading with his Lord for forgiveness for his sins, he is seeking to secure the jewel of his sinlessness from the stain of justice' " (p 364)

We are also informed about the higher states of prayer of Muhammad, what may be classified as the *mystical prayer* of the Prophet of Islam "Muhammad, the Chosen One, was detached from both worlds in order to be intimately united with God" (p 65). "Muhammad's heart rose to the stage of his soul, while his soul soared to that of his head His head reached the divine Majesty. The face of Truth itself was disclosed to him. His body was in the state of proximity to God, his heart was nearer still, his soul was very close to God, while his head was immediately adjacent to Him. All that was revealed to him at that stage occurred while he was at prayer. He heard God's word without any intermediary and was greatly enlightened by the disclosure of hidden things. Sparks shot forth from the fire of zeal burning in his heart. His head was in quest of union. It cried out, 'O Bilal, bring me the release of prayer ! O Bilal, bring relief to my inner fire, because the direction for the prayer of the lovers is the beauty and perfection of the Friend, not the Rock of Jerusalem, or the Kaaba, or even the divine throne itself' " (p 125). "When it became Muhammad's turn this waiting was removed and exchanged for a vessel filled to the brim with union, which he enjoyed, from time to time, at the hand of the gracious cupbearer" (p 269). Muhammad said "Sometimes I am raised to the throne of intimacy with God. At other times I am sent to the abode of the violence of Abu Jahl" (p 364) It is related, says Sharafuddin, that, when someone was asked if he wanted to see God, he replied in the negative. Asked to explain himself, he said "Because Moses desired to see God, but did not, whereas Muhammad had no such desire and yet saw Him" (p 64) "It is said that when the Lord of Both Worlds cast a glance with his perceptive eye from the world of prophecy to that of divine Unity, he was swept off his feet by the intensity of his desire; his existence passed into oblivion in the utmost corner of nothingness; his joints became hidden to all; he passed beyond the realm of humanity" (p. 155).

Sharafuddin refers to *revelation* on a few occasions, and this topic is of interest to us "The Master of the world was told: 'O Prophet of God, know that there is no god but God' (Q. 47: 19). This is what was said to him, but to others it was said. 'Say that there is no god but God !' He was aware that the veil of his humanity was extremely delicate and, through the refinement of the flames of the light that, at the time of the divine manifestation, become active in him, the thin veil of his humanity had been completely effaced. What remains hidden from others was fully revealed to him. For the confirmation of what was hidden, there came a manifestation by word, while witnessing and direct vision came by faith, through knowledge" (p. 155) "For the sake of conveying the message, Muhammad was brought back to the realm of prophecy so that, from time to time, the righteous Aisha would ask him 'Speak to me of your own affairs for a while !'" (p 155) In addition to prophetic revelation, Sharafuddin speaks about *personal revelations* "A man had spent many long years of his life in submission and worship He had engaged in a long struggle with himself and had undergone many hardships. A revelation came to the Prophet 'Tell him he is destined for hell ? Why should he take such pains ?' When the Prophet conveyed this revelation to the man, he simply intensified his various religious practices, in a spirit of great joy and happiness People were filled with astonishment at the sight They said 'What is this ? Aren't you destined for hell ?' He replied 'I considered myself to be totally unworthy of gaining admission into His kingdom. Not that I have been judged worthy of hell, what wealth is mine !'" (p 151) "It is also related that a devoted person was engaged in devotion towards God in a forest for an extended period He saw a bird that had made a nest It had a very pleasant voice He thought that he would make his cell under that tree so that he might be cheered by its singing He put his plan into execution In the meantime, a revelation came to the Prophet. 'Tell that dervish You have affection for a particular creature Hence I shall cast you down from the rank you have acquired, and by no means will you be able to reach it again, no matter how much you try'" (p 189).

Miracles are part and parcel of the Muhammad we find in Sharafuddin's letters They include the miraculous power of being able to foretell the future "There were ten people about whom the prophet testified that they are among the people of paradise Because of his assertion, they were at peace and not at all anxious about their end" (p 40) "The Prophet said 'Just as I can see from in front, so too can I see from behind'" (p 59) "The Prophet said· 'My people will be divided into seventy-three different sects, among which seventy-two will be deviations, and one the path to salvation'" (p. 102). "Muham-

mad said. 'Surely I smell the fragrance of Yemen ! It is the gentle breeze wafting from the inflamed heart of a camel driver that has produced intoxication from the direction of Yemen'" (p. 181). "When the Prophet arrived in the world, the first to do him reverence were the idols in the Kaaba — all 360 of them ! They fell down in worship" (p 217). "We have heard in a story that when a pulpit was erected, the tree against which Muhammad used to lean while preaching began to cry out due to the pain of its separation from the Prophet" (p 231) There is a story about a shirt which the Prophet had given to a certain hypocrite It was placed on his grave when he died. Some people asked the Prophet if it would benefit him "As long as even a thread of it remains, that man will not have to undergo any torments", was his reply (p 270) Hilal, the slave of Mughira, was a very holy man, but this was known only to the prophet, who used to ask him to pray for him When he died, the following was related: 'Early one morning, the Prophet turned to his companions with whom he was sitting and said 'Get up ! At this moment creation has been clothed with the garment of the trial of Hilal'" (p 359). There are many allusions to Muhammad's ascent to God For example "If, on the night of his ascent, the Pride of the Worlds (Muhammad) had looked back at anything at all, he would have been transfixed there, and would not have been taken up to the distance of two bow lengths from God himself" (p 201).

Muhammad is considered to be *sinless* "Our leader, the Prophet, is completely sinless" (p 233) "It is the sinlessness of the Chosen One that adorns earth and heaven, his is the name that is proclaimed as king throughout creation" (p 363) The Prophet makes the following claim "I am the most eloquent among Arabs and non-Arabs !" (p 99) In addition to the miraculous material mentioned — and it could be added to — is the following interesting excerpt on the subject "If there were no other miracle, Muhammad's virtues and pleasing manners would be a sufficient witness to his genuineness Among the false claimants and people who rejected him there were those who, when they saw him alone, said 'This is not the face of a liar !' Immediately they placed their faith in him and accepted Islam, without miracles or arguments" (p 241)

There is a *Logos-like dimension* to Sharafuddin Maneri's Muhammad "The King of Prophets had the crown of 'If it were not for you, I would not have created the heavens', placed upon his head" (p. 211). "Should not I, who am Lord of Both Worlds, do greater works ?" (p 308) "Except for you (Muhamad) I would not have created the world" (p. 365) "Muhammad, the Apostle of God, the very purpose of both worlds,

cried out..." (p. 396). Hence we are not surprised to find that Muhammad is more exalted than the angels. "Gabriel's being was at the service of Muhammad so that, on the night of ascent, it was he who cared for the Prophet's mount" (p. 83). His excellence in comparison to the saints is not unexpected. "You should know that if all the states and spirits of the entire world of the saints were placed beside one step of the Prophet, their worthlessness would be evident. The reason is that they are still seeking and advancing, while the prophets have already arrived" (p 81) "It was the Prophet who took the first step into the realm of witnessing, since he pioneered this path. How can saints be compared to him ?" (p. 81). There is an interesting communal element in the subordinate role of the saints. "We can say that the saints bear witness to the genuineness of the gift of prophecy that the Prophet exercises until the very Day of Resurrection" (p. 48) The call to imitate the Prophet comes naturally to Muslims. "It is a sign of riches and honour for a creature if he is concerned with imitating the leader of the Muslims, as the Quran attests. 'Imitate me and God will befriend you'" (p. 107) This is put more strongly in a command from on high that came to Bayazid: "O Bayazid, your liberation from yourself is bound up with submission to my friend (Muhammad) Anoint your eyes with the dust upon which he trod ! Show diligence in imitating him !" (p 82) Imitating the Prophet bears fruit "The pact of friendship and the knot of love for the Creator, through the guidance of Muhammad, will remain firm" (p 107)

We now come to the *teaching* of Muhammad. "The Prophet hinted at the efficacy of the forty-day retreat when he said. 'Anyone who dedicates forty days to God, God, in turn, will order streams of wsidom to issue forth continuously from his heart and upon his tongue'" (p. 90) "Except for paradise, there is no more pleasing reward than the pilgrimage" (p 135). "The Prophet, reporting what God has communicated to him, has said. 'I give more to the person who is absorbed in remembrance of Me and refrains from asking questions than to those who perpetually question me'" (p. 137). The Prophet said. "Heaven is attained only after undergoing many trials and tribulations, while one arrives in hell after treading an easy path and having pandered to one's lusts" (p 142). Several sayings of the Prophet are given. "Knowledge directs action, and action follows knowledge. The sleep of a learned man is better than the prayer of an ignorant one. A person who acts without knowledge does more damage than good. God inspires the fortunate ones with knowledge, while He deprives the unfortunate ones of it" (p. 144). The Messenger said: "Those who are slaves to the world, to money, to their own bellies, to lust and to fine raiment will all be destroyed" (p. 172). The Prophet has said:

"When God Almighty befriends someone, He rains calamities upon him, and when someone displays diligence in his love for Him, He puts him to the test" (p. 187). When asked what this testing might be, he replied. "God does not spare a man's property, wife or children" (p 187). The following words of the Messenger are thought-provoking "When God loves one of His servants in a special way, his sins do no real damage" (p 188)

"The Prophet said to an Arab who had broken his fast in the month of Ramzan 'Eat and also feed your wife and children ! It is lawful for you, but not for anyone else ' This was clearly an abrogation" (p 43) "Satan dwells with the man who is by himself, but he remains at a distance if there are two together" (p 290) "Being quick to assist widows or the poverty-stricken is like fighting a holy war on the Way to the Lord, or like observing the fast by day and keeping vigil by night" (p 294) When the Prophet came accross a man who was overdoing his austerities, he said "O Abdullah, your animal soul too has some rights over you ! If you insist on destroying it, you will be caught and fall into sin" (p 340) He uttered these words of comfort for dying Muslims "Everyone who is dying, and knows that there is no god but God, will go to heaven" (p 410) "Jair Abdullah said· 'I was once in attendance upon the Prophet when a full moon was shining He said Undoubtedly you will see your Lord without any veil, just as you see this moon' " (p 423) Finally, we have his reply to a question about the vision that creatures have of their Lord "Some will see their Lord once a month, some will see Him once a week, and others will see Him morning and evening, that is to say, day and night" (p 424)

Reflections on Sharafuddin's Portrait of Muhammad

It is now time for us to reflect on this material If we try to find a unifying principle in the material itself, we shall fail For example, how do we reconcile the statement that "the Prophet did not show anger towards anyone" with his own avowal, "I am a man I get angry ?" Again, if "he is completely sinless", how can he pray "O God, my sins are great ?" Again, although "he did not connive at evil", yet he told a thief to deny that he had stolen Or again, if we take the picture painted here, how can it be squared with that of the simple warner of the Quran ? Or if a person begins to examine each statement, taking into account the period and geographical situation of Mecca and Medina, many statements would not survive such a scrutiny For example, what is the sense of talking about a bower of pulped reeds to afford protection from the rain in Medina ?

No, we are forced to look elsewhere for a principle of unity, namely, to the mind of the author, Sharafuddin Maneri himself We have to ask ourselves one simple question, seeking an answer that is drawn from a study of the evidence before us. The question is this· "What was Sharafuddin Maneri aiming at when he was quoting from the life and teaching of Muhammad in his letters ?"

Was he aiming at a critical historical exposition of Muhammad's life and teaching ? The answer to this has to be in the negative, for the simple reason that any such presentation must be based squarely on the Muhammad of the Quran Anything from any other source whatever that is in flat contradiction with what is contained in the Quran has to be rejected as apocryphal Clearly, Sharafuddin was not trying to do this for he quoted texts that assert Muhammad's Logos-like stature and miraculous works, both sets of texts being in flat contradiction with the data of the Quran Could one assert that he was devoid of any critical sense, that he was incapable of judging the objective value of traditions about Muhammad and simply swallowed them all indiscriminately ? Nobody who has studied the life and teaching of Sharafuddin Maneri could agree with this statement ! He was, in fact, a noted traditionist, as the following excerpt, from the *malfuz* entitled *Khan-i Pur Ni'amat* indicates

"Those who are renowned for their faith and have become acquainted with the full meaning of Almighty God's Book and the Traditions are capable of giving legal decisions and know where it is applicable Nowadays if the expounders of the Law are asked about a particular tradition they are at a loss to reply The crux of the matter is simply this They should have both Quranic exegesis and the traditions at their finger-tips On this basis they will be able to issue commands for they will be drawn from the Quran and Tradition" (6th assembly)

These words indicate that, far from being wishy-washy, Sharafuddin could employ trenchant argumentation to prove his point Many other instances of his intellectual acumen could be cited but this one indication will suffice to show that, if he chose to utilize traditions in an apparently indiscriminate fashion, it was not because he was not well versed in the science of Tradition

In our quest for Sharafuddin's aim in utilizing texts about Muhammad in his letters we could go to the expressed aim of the letters themselves, as recorded for us by their compiler, Zain Badr Arabi. After informing us of Qazi Shamsuddin's repeated requests for some written assistance, he continues "On account of this need, the Revered Master put to writing, by means of his indulgent pen, a few lines

according to what needed to be acquired in order to meet the expectations of the petitioner He has described the ranks and stages of the travellers, the states and affairs of the disciples, such as repentance, discipleship, belief in the Unity of God, mystical knowledge, passionate and affectionate love, turning back and going ahead, attraction and effort, servitude and service, solitude and seclusion, security and blame, spiritual guides and novices, and other similar things, in accordance with the needs of novices and travellers, as well as stories of our predecessors which could serve both to confirm and render palatable this teaching" (Compiler's Preface) Clearly the explicit aim is to help foster the spiritual life of the reader He is meant to gain as much spiritual profit as possible from the letters It is in this context, namely that of a means to an end, that the life and teaching of Muhammad is proposed Sharafuddin is not conducting a history class, nor giving a critical presentation of traditions He is utilizing Muhammad's life and teaching as a source of light and inspiration for his own teaching.

If we turn to his first letter we find him telling us something similar. "This letter should be given careful, detailed consideration, for it will be found to be the foundation of all stages, states, activities, and ecstatic phenomena It will also help the reader to understand the sayings and allusions of religious leaders, when he peruses their writings, for this is what God is like' (p 15) In other words, he is writing about man's relationship with God, and he is doing so not as a novice but as one who is hailed by Zain Badr Arabi as "our lord, master, teacher and guide along the way to God', because he has himself been "engrossed in witnessing manifestations and revelations" Yes, the letters do indeed reveal that Sharafuddin has seen much, and what could be more natural than that his beloved Prophet should himself share in his heavenly illumination ? Thus his vision of Muhammad is that of a human being entirely transformed by divine grace and is, in turn, a reflection of his own transformed humanity

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A Muslim Mission Instruction

Introduced, Translated and Annotated by Christian W. TROLL, S J.

Introduction

I. *The Tablīghī Jamā'at and its Founder*

The most popular and wide-spread Islamic reform movement today in the Indian Subcontinent — and, perhaps, in the whole of the Islamic world — is the Tablīghī Jamā'at (Preaching Congregation) of Delhi Not rarely the movement is termed, more adequately, *tahrīk-i īmān* (Faith Movement) or *dīnī da'wat* (Religious Mission) Both these names were frequently used by the founder himself The Tablīghī Jamā'at was started by Maulana Muhammad Ilyās (1885-1944) of Kandhla, a small town in the district of Muzaffrnagar, U P Maulana Ilyās hailed from a family deeply marked, for generations, by scholarship in the Islamic religious sciences, especially in the field of Hadith and Fiqh His Sufi practice and teaching (tārīqa) and his concern for the reform of Muslim life was inspired above all by Shāh Walī Allāh of Delhi (1703-1772) and his 'followers'

In the early 1920's Maulana Ilyās founded a *madrasa* in the Bangle Walī Masjid (i e , Bungalow Mosque) neighbouring the famous shrine of Hadrat Nizāmuddīn in Delhi This mosque later became the centre of all his *tablīghī* activities It has remained so to this day Muhammad Ilyās was followed as *amīr* of the movement by his son Maulana Yūsuf (d 1965) Maulana In'āmul Hasan, son of Ikrāmul Hasan, the son of Maulana Ilyās, has been the *amīr* of the Tablīghī Jamā'at since 1965

II *The Movement in Literature*

As could be expected, the movement has not gone unnoticed by scholars of Islam Almost a decade ago M Anwarul Haque (1972) presented the first monograph of the movement in English basing himself to a very large extent on the pioneering work in Urdu *Maulana Muhammad Ilyās and his dīnī da'wat*, by Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (1947) Nadwi writes as a long-standing confidant and as a congenial religious authority of outstanding literary merit A full translation of Nadwi's work was published recently (Nadwi, 1979)

M Anwarul Haque's study has the merit of showing how Maulana Ilyās' activities and his teaching are rooted in the Indian Sufi tradition of the Chishti *silsila* Haque's work keeps in its presentation to the standards of modern scholarship It includes a comprehensive bibliography, the dates and other relevant details of important Indian scholars mentioned, a glossary, an index and tables of relevant Sufi affiliations.

In addition to the many extracts from Maulana Ilyās' letters and a good number of his sayings found in the English translation of Nadwi's work, we have an important primary source for Ilyās and the essence of his original idea, in English, in his pithily written pamphlet *A Call to Muslims* (1944). This "Call" was originally addressed to the All-India Conference of the ulama and the Muslim political leaders,

held at Delhi in April, 1944. In this pamphlet, therefore, Maulana Ilyās puts his basic vision and plan of action in line with outstanding ulama of the past, like al-Ghazālī (d A D 1111), Shyakh Aḥmad Sirhindī (1564-1624) and Shāh Walī Allāh Dihlawī, each of whom he quotes at length, thus demonstrating a striking continuity with authoritative teaching of the past

Ziya-ul Hasan Faruqi's short but substantial portrait of the Tablīghī Jamāʿat (Faruqi, 1971) provides the best succinct introduction to it in English He repeatedly quotes from the *Malfūẓāt* of Ilyās as they have been collected and edited by another longstanding, learned supporter and interpreter of the movement, Maulana Manzūr Nuʿmānī, the famous editor of the monthly *al-Furqān* in Lucknow We intend to provide fuller bibliographical information, especially with regard to primary and secondary source material in Urdu, in the context of a more detailed study under preparation, on aspects of the spirituality of the Tablīghī Jamāʿat. The study will appear in volume II of *Islam in India. Studies and Commentaries* (to be published in New Delhi, 1983)

The short text presented in translation here below is taken from the third impression of a widespread booklet in Urdu *Tablīghī kām* (Iftikhār Farīdī, 1977, pp 61-72). This booklet presents a small number of addresses and religious instructions by the successor of Muhammad Ilyās, Maulana Muhammad Yusuf, who is popularly known as Hazratji

III *Some Characteristics of the Tablīghī Jamāʿat*

In presenting this text together with some explanations, we hope to convey an idea of the Movement in action, of the direct and practical approach characteristic of it In order to appreciate it fully one would need to have had the privilege of taking part in some of its regularly held larger conventions They normally last three days, the last of which concentrates on forming the groups of workers that will set out in the afternoon of this third day of the convention to near and far-off places inside and outside the country The Movement as a whole, and each *jamāʿat* (single group of workers) in particular, aims at re-living in our day and age the Prophet's and his Companions' life which is seen as having been, basically, a life in companionship under the guidance of the *amīr*, continuously on the move in order to deepen one's own *islām* whilst communicating it to the people around.

Maulana Ilyās was a fully-trained *shaykh* in the Sābiriyya, a branch of the Chishti family of Sufis Throughout his life he was regarded as an effective, outstanding spiritual teacher Early in his life, through his father, he came in contact with the neglected Muslims of Mewat — a large rural area south of Delhi — who lived in a state of quasi Jāhiliyya, as Ilyās saw it They had converted to Islam long ago, but the faith had not taken deep roots yet Initial efforts of Maulana Ilyās at establishing *maktabs* and *madrasas* throughout the region, did not yield satisfying fruits The milieu (*mahawl*), as Ilyās put it, remained unaffected. So he developed a new method of reform with the aim of eventually changing the whole environment, and society at large, into a truly Islamic one. This movement he conceived of on the pattern of the Prophet and his Companions' *tablīgh* which he considered to have been the chief work of indeed all the prophets.

To re-live this earliest Islamic 'movement' would be a collective effort Those actively taking part in it would at the same time reform and deepen their own belief and practice and convey the message to others, striving among the people for their spiritual uplift Every member of the Muslim community should serve as an effective transmitter of Islam through learning and teaching.

IV. *The Programme*

To this effect preaching groups (*jamā'ats*) would be formed, each of them like a moving *khānqāh* (Sufi retreat), a mobile *madrasa* and a moral and religious training ground The Maulana, an effective pedagogue, summarized the programme in six succinct points which provide the firm backbone and unchanging source of inspiration for the movement

1. *al-kalima al-ṭayyiba* The repeated sincere recitation of the *kalima* is meant to bring home to all Muslims the Lordship and Sovereignty of God and the fact that the Muslim is nothing but his creature, servant and slave All action must be performed in total submission to God

2 *al-ṣalāt wa mā yata'allaqa bihā* Ritual prayer performed at the appointed hours should be full of sincerity and earnestness, refining and improving all the habits of the believer

3 *al-'ilm wa dhikru Allāh ta'ālā* True religion cannot be followed without knowledge about what Muhammad brought for the guidance and enlightenment of mankind It is binding upon every Muslim to learn and teach this knowledge to others, including Allāh's commandments The injunction of *dhikr* aims at praising God's glory

4 *ikrām al-muslim wa ihtirāmuhu* This is a special application of the wider injunction, *ikrām al-nās*, kindness and respect for all men In the context of the Movement the injunction stresses the need to bring back the various factions and different classes in Muslim society to the fold of the true Islamic brotherhood

5 *taṣḥīḥ al-niyya wa ikhlāsuhā* Sincerity is ceaselessly inculcated against the tendency towards show and ostentation

6 *al-nafr* Maulana Ilyās explains "Everyone is required to reserve a few days each month and a few weeks each year for *tabligh* which, it is believed, brings Allah's blessings and mercy upon him This is a common duty of all Muslims, and a few volunteers should always be ready to offer to leave their homes and hearths to travel to distant places for striving in the path of Allah, cheerfully bearing all hardships that may fall upon them A person with comparatively better knowledge is their *mu'allim* and one with the capability of management their Amir " (*A Call to Muslims*, pp 16-17)

7 Sometimes a seventh point is added as a precautionary measure (parhez) *tark mā lā ya'ni*, i e , abstaining from wasting time, from activities that do not bring any spiritual gain

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Hadrat Maulana Yusuf's Instruction to the Members of Preaching Groups (jamā'ats) Setting out from a Convention

AFTER delivering the customary sermon (*khuṭba*) the Maulana said. The sun is luminous. In it is light. It circulates with this light, and thus it spreads light in the world. If the sun, instead of being light, was dark, if it contained darknenss instead of light, then it would be a means of spreading darkness.

You set out leaving your homes. You will tour this world, near and far. If there is light in you then through you light will spread; if darkness, then darkness. You must therefore endeavour to have light in you and to become luminous Not in everybody's nature is there light Light comes into man by deeds of light So you people must perform deeds of light in order that light may enter you and spread through you You must avoid deeds of darkness so as not to become agents for spreading darkness.

Deeds of light are those Muhammadan actions (*Muhammadī aᶜmāl*)[1] which are done for the pleasure of God You need to perform these with such frequency, regularity and single-mindedness that you become, as it were, dyed in their brightness The deeds of light are these:

(1) The invitation (*daᶜwat*)[2] to acquire faith and certainty (*īmān-o-yaqīn*)[3] This *daᶜwat* is our special heritage from the prophets and is the greatest manifestation of God's benevolence to his creatures.

(2) Ritual prayer and all the acts of worship (*ᶜibādāt*), including the remembrance of God (*dhikr*)[4] and recitation of the Quran, prayer of supplication and prayer of forgiveness

(3) Occupying oneself with acquiring knowledge (*ᶜilm*),[5] especially the knowledge explaining the fruits of men's actions and deeds which are to become manifest in the next world

1 Actions done by Muhammad and thus to be imitated by his followers

2 In Arabic and other Islamic languages the term *daᶜwat* is the technical term for missionary activity In non-technical language it means call, summons, invitation

3 Maulana Ilyās repeatedly made clear why he regarded the Tablīghī Jamāᶜat essentially as *tahrīk-i īmān*, a faith movement Cf Abul Hasan Alī NADWĪ (1947), pp 293f , Manẓūr NŪMĀNĪ (1978), *malfūz* (saying), nn 90, 212 *Yaqīn*, in this context, refers to certainty in belief regarding the reality of the world to come and of divine reward and punishment To give expression to this Ilyās as well as Yūsuf frequently employed the pair of terms *īmān-o-intisāb* Cf M NUᶜMANĪ (ed) (1978), pp 149f (*malfūz*, n 172), NADWĪ (1947), pp 196ff, NADWI (1979), pp 95ff

4 Maulana Ilyās was an accomplished Sufi belonging to the Sābirī branch of the Chistī order, thus he practiced dhikr in the tradition of Sābiriyya In his reform work among the Mewātis he came to the conviction that while the established Sufi practices for *dhikr* were profitable for the relatively small number of (specially called) persons, the general body of Muslims could make little or no progress in *dhikr* thus practised and conceived of On the one hand, therefore, he stressed — in the light of the practice of the Prophet and his Companions, as conceived by him — that *dhikr* was basically the intensive living out of the spirit of *imān-o-iḥtisāb* in the various walks and circumstances of life On the other hand, he prescribed for the members of his movement a definite daily practice of *dhikr* prayers to be performed individually, orally or simply in the heart, with or without the aid of rosary beads For more details concerning *tilāwat* and *dhikr* as practised in the Tablīghī Jamāᶜat see M Anwarul HAQ (1972), pp 63ff Maulana Yūsuf explained the relationship between *namāz* and *dhikr* thus "Therefore, in order to acquire the inner wealth (of ritual prayer) one will have to make an effort in *dhikr* Its easy form is this, that whatever is recited in *namāz*, should be recited again and again, concentrating on God's presence!" See also NADWĪ (1947), pp 308ff, NADWĪ (1979), pp 144ff

5. *ᶜilm* is taken here in the restricted sense of learning about the *faḍā'il* (virtues, blessings) of the prescribed works of worship It involves attentive particıpaiton in the teaching sessions of the *jamāᶜat* and private study of recommended works.

(4) The excellent morals which were those of the Prophet Muhammad and which he taught. They are summed up succinctly in these words: Serving God's creatures and treating them well, for the pleasure of God.

These then are those luminous actions which, if only they are performed frequently and continuously, life is generated and rendered luminous You must move about keeping all the time in these very actions.

As you set out, remember· you are leaving behind you only your homes and your families and familiar surroundings ! Yet, you are not leaving behind your lower soul (*nafs*) and Satan[6] These two enemies will stick to you at every step, day and night Your bad habits, too, will accompany you And all these will pull you towards those actions through which darkness will enter you, which will remove you far away from God and from his pleasure You will be able to avoid the evil of those enemies only if you take utmost care engaging yourself day and night, at all time — apart from the six or seven hours sleep you need — in luminous actions. Either you (1) invite to the faith and to actions of the faith or (2) you occupy yourself with ritual prayer, remembrance of God and the recitation of the Quran or with any other act of worship, or (3) engage in teaching and learning (*taʿlīm awr taʿallum*),[7] or (4) you perform a work of service The only way of avoiding the evil of the lower soul and of Satan, is never to disengage yourselves from these works. 'An empty house, the devil will take possession of !,

Furthermore, these actions will become the means of acquiring light only if and when they are done solely for the pleasure of God and

Prominent among these is the semi-official collection of treatises by Maulana Muhammad ZAKARIYYA, *Tablighī nisāb* (New Delhi Idāra-i Ishāʿat-i Dīniyyāt, 1962), which includes· Accounts of the Companions of the Prophet; Virtues of Prayer, Virtues of Preaching, of *dhikr*; of the Quran, of Ramadan.

6 The struggle against Satan and the inordinate desires of the lower soul is a major point in the teaching of the Movement from its very beginning *Mujāhida* (like *jihād* the *masdar* of *jāhada*) carries traditionally the meaning of spiritual battle, termed by some *al-jihād al-akbar* In several of his sayings *Ilyās* discusses *tablīgh* in terms of the *maghāzī* and the *jihād* of the Companions of the Prophet (*malfūẓ* nn 93, 95, 152, 200). Yūsuf analyses in detail the subtle temptations held out by Satan and the lower soul in *tablīgh* He explains *mujāhida* as the adequate response of the *muballigh* to those temptations The fruit of a true realization of the bondsman's spiritual striving against the lower soul and Satan is the gift of guidance (*hidāyat*) and of light (*nūr*). "It (the holy effort against the lower soul) will become the well-spring of guidance for the bondsman From his heart rays of light will pass on into the hearts of the Muslims and men in general and people will be drawn to come towards God " See Iftikhār FARIDI (1977), p. 43

7 See note 5 on *ʿilm* Yusuf teaches. "The meaning of teaching is that by listening attentively and eagerly and by persisting in listening there is created the taste and desire to get fully engaged in doing the works (of *tablīgh*) as well as a new incentive to learn more and more about the way of performing them perfectly well with regard to precision as well as spiritual intensity."

holding before your eyes constantly the reward in the life to come.[8] If — may God forbid it — the intention (*niyya*) should cease to remain pure (*khāliṣ*), then these same actions will pull effectively towards hell. To Hadrat Abū Hurayra is attributed the famous Tradition that the messenger of God said: On Resurrection Day three men will be condemned to hell and will be the first to be thrown into hell. The first will be one learned in religion (*dīn*) and in the Quran The second will be a rich and generous man whom God had favoured in this world with much wealth and who had spent the God-given riches liberally, with an open hand, in good works The third man will be a martyr (*shahīd*) who had been slain by the sword of an enemy during jihad. Yet, every one of the three had failed to perform these works purely for God (*khāliṣan li wajhi Allāh*) but rather in order to gain name, fame and honour in this world Now the Messenger of God has stated that on the Day of Resurrection when these three men stand before God, he will address them thus: We know the state of your hearts and intentions You have not performed these good works and luminous deeds for our pleasure but rather for gaining in this world name and fame, which indeed you have already obtained So, there, in the afterlife nothing is left for you Then, on account of these same works they will be dragged away and thrown into hell And the Tradition makes it clear that they will be actually the first to be condemned to hell (Our refuge is in God)

Reflect how frightening this Tradition is! Whenever Hadrat Abū Hurayra related it, he would emit cries of fear at one time and faint at another Once when a Follower of a Companion (*tābiʿī*) who had heard this Tradition from Abū Hurayra, related it to Hadrat Muʿāwiya, the latter was moved to tears so intensely that the people began to fear his life Only much later did he recover and said 'God and his Messenger have stated truly in the Holy Quran and his Messenger has quite correctly repeated to us from the part of God: Whoever intends in his actions this world and its glamour, to him We shall indeed grant the full fruit of his actions in this world and there will be so far him no want. Yet, for the same person the life to come will bring nothing but the fire of hell. The actions performed will be lost, without gain and fruit in the life of bliss.[9]

In any case, luminous actions can be instrumental in generating light in others only if they are performed purely for the pleasure of

8 In his teaching Yusuf clearly distinguishes between the purity of intention which consists in centring one's action solely on God and the certainty of faith regarding the reality of reward or punishment in the life to come Cf. FARIDI (1977), pp 37f.

9. We have translated here the Urdu paraphrase which Yusuf gives of Q 11.15-16.

God and in view of the next life.[10] You must, therefore, on the one hand, employ all your time for these very works, and, on the other hand, see to it that the intention is correct. When Satan does not succeed in deflecting a bondsman from a good action, he tries to spoil the intention for which it is done When good actions are performed for the pleasure of someone other than God, they cease to be 'related' (*nisbat*) to God.[11] And when works are done for the pleasure of God, yet are not in themselves works pleasing to him, then too they are not 'related' to God, and they fail to bring about his pleasure. Therefore two efforts are demanded of you One, to keep engaged in works that are to God's pleasure, at every moment and with such intensity that you get, as it were, dyed in their very colour, the second is solicitude for the correctness of the intention, in other words, to see to it diligently that in every action you aim at God's pleasure All success lies in the single pleasure of God and all failure and lack of success consist in his displeasure

I have already said that at this moment of setting out on *gasht* (a tour),[12] you should busy yourself with four things only The foremost one is faith and certainty and the call to actions of faith (*īmānwāle a'māl kī da'wat*) For this call there are general tours and special ones, the principles and rules of conduct (*ādāb*) for which will be spelled out at the times set for *gasht* You should listen to these instructions with attention When you actually set out for *da'wat* to the lanes and bazaars, Satan will draw your attention to sensuous forms (*naqshoṅkī taraf*) displayed there. You must therefore first of all make prayers of supplication, asking God Most High to preserve you from the evil of Satan and of the lower soul and to give you the grace to work according to his will Throughout *gasht* you should remain preoccupied with keeping your inner eye (*nazar*) solely on the grandeur and beauty (*jalāl awr jamāl*) of God and his sublime attributes[13]

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10 Cf the end of note 8 Maintaining absolute purity of intention is part of the spiritual effort (*mujāhida*)

11 *nisbat* denotes in Sufi language the acquired habitual relationship of the *sālik* with God It is acquired by the constant practice of good intention in everything

12 *Jalāl* and *Jamāl* succinctly summarize the 'fascinating' and 'awe-inspiring' aspect of the Divine Mystery On this point see A SCHIMMEL, "Religious Experience in Islam", in *The Way* (London), January 1978, pp 36-43

13 Every member of the Movement is member of a local *jamā'at* which consists of about ten persons, comprising one *amīr* and at least one member sufficiently advanced in *'ilm* to be *mu'allim* of the group Conventions are held from which *jamā'ats* are formed These move out to near or far-off areas for 40 days (=one *chilla*) or two or three *chillas* These *jamā'ats* are composed of members from diverse geographical, social and racial backgrounds Each member has to pay for his expenses from his savings An essential part of the daily program of the *jamā'ats* is *gasht* as described in the text For more details cf chapter V of M Anwarul HAQ (1972) and Iftikhār FARĪDĪ (1977), pp. 44-46

Your eyes should be downcast and your purpose should continuously be kept before your eyes. It is as when a sick person is taken to hospital He and those with him will not show any interest in the splendid buildings and shapes that meet their eyes The cure of the sick person will be their only preoccupation

On special *gasht*, if you realize that the person you are meeting is not ready at that moment to listen with attention to what you are saying, then it will be appropriate for you to bring the conversation quickly to an end and to take your leave And you should pray for that person If, however, you see that he is prepared to listen to you, then put the whole matter before him and tell him to make himself free for the purpose

When you call upon religious dignitaries, on special *gasht*, simply ask them for permission to say a prayer of supplication (*duʿā*) If, however, you notice that they are attentive, mention something about the work (of *tablīgh*, preaching) When you are on general *gasht*, assemble the people in the mosque and place before them 'faith and certainty', ritual prayer, prayer of remembrance of God (*dhikr*), knowledge of religion (*ʿilm-i dīn*), morals and religious endeavour (*dīnī jadd-o-jahd*) [14] Make also an effort to form new *jamāʿats* (*tashkīl*) [15] Yet be not satisfied with just forming new *jamāʿats* Rather try your best to help those who have pledged themselves and given their names to set out on the way (of *tablīgh*) Help them to keep their promises. As far as possible you should organize matters in such a way that these *jamāʿats* spend their time well Those people who have not been able to make up their minds to set out (on a *jamāʿat*) away from home, should be roused to sign up for local *gasht*, local convention (*ijtimāʿ*), teaching, ritual prayer and *dhikr* And these works should be organized

The outcome of all this labour concerning *daʿwat* can be compared to the situation of a farmer who has sown the seed and now fixes his attention upon God in entreaty and supplication God alone is the Changer of hearts He alone gives, to whom he wishes, faith and works of faith And He deprives whom he wishes to deprive

The second work after *daʿwat* is teaching (*taʿlīm*) Let all sit down for teaching, as is befitting The heart of each listener should be humbly conscious of the grandeur of the knowledge the Messenger of God has brought The virtues (*faḍā'il*)[16] should be made the subject

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14 *jadd-o-jahd* here denotes more or less what earlier in the text was designated as *mujahida* See above explanation in note 6

15 *tashkīl* is one of the technical terms proper to the Tablīghī Jamāʿat the forming of a new *jamāʿat* and its specific objective (where to go, for how long, etc) *Tashkīl* is the fruit of each convention (*ijtimā*), and it is usually entrusted to long-standing workers of the Movement, towards the end of each convention.

16. See above explanation in note 5.

of discussion and the prayers of supplication, which Muhammad taught, should be learnt by heart.

When there is time left after *daʿwat* and teaching, if there is no other work that needs to be done at that time, supererogatory prayers should be said or the Quran recited, or one should occupy oneself with *dhikr-o-tasbīh*, or with the service of one of God's servants.

Just as during ritual prayer the worshipper is either in a standing or bowing or prostrating position, in exactly the same way, when a person has set out on the way of *daʿwat*, he should either be engaged in *daʿwat* or in teaching and learning, or in *dhikr* and worship, or in the service of some creature of God Performing either of these four works should be the fundamental objective during this whole period of time. And they should be performed so often that they become habit and second nature. They should be done groupwise (*ijtimāʿī*) and individually (*infirādī*). *Ijtimāʿī* designates whatever falls under the program of the *jamāʿat*, as for instance *daʿwat* at the time of general and special *gasht*, teaching during the time appointed for teaching in the *jamāʿat*, as well as the prescribed ritual prayer and the additional prayers that are customary and recommended both before and after, and, finally, the various activities that go into the preparation of the meals and such like, according to the division of tasks in the *jamāʿat*. Individual *daʿwat*, individual teaching, individual acts of worship, individual service designate what an individual member does in his spare time when there is no group work to be done. After the meal at noon, for instance, there is usually no *jamāʿatī* work of *daʿwat* or teaching and so on Every member is allowed to rest during that time Now, if a bondsman of God, instead of taking rest at this hour, wishes to visit a person to talk to him about matters concerning *daʿwat* to the faith (*daʿwat-i īmān*), or wishes to teach some servant of God a prayer of supplication or to correct someone's (way of performing) ritual prayer, or if he prefers to stand in a corner of the mosque and recite supererogatory prayers, or to do some service to a certain compaign, all these are forms of individual action

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17 M. ILYĀS in one of his sayings is reported to have said "Make people eager to leave their homes in order to preach and teach *dīn* and to spread it at their own expense. And if such expense is really beyond their means, then arrange that they be helped by (people of) their own milieu (*māhawl*) And if this proves impossible, then (let them be helped) from another side But by all means see to it that *ishrāf-i nafs* does not develop in them This attitude, i.e , to rely for (the fulfilment of) one's need on God's bondsmen rather than on God himself (which is called *ishrāf-i nafs*) *nafs*) is apt to undermine completely the basis of *īmān* Those who set out on the way should also be clearly taught to consider such hardships of the way as hunger, thirst and the like, as a mercy of God For the hardships of this way are the food of the prophets, of the trusted friends and (God's) near ones." See NUʿMĀNI (ed) (1978), p. 71 (*malfūẓ*, n. 82).

In any case, when setting out on the way of God, the four kinds of work just enumerated should be made the fundamental objective Apart from the common necessities of human nature, the 'preachers' should occupy themselves exclusively with these works Through these works light will come into their life and then — God permitting — this light will catch on and spread.

In addition to these four works, only four further works — by way of unavoidable necessity — will be performed, and only in so far as necessity arises These are: (1) to eat and drink, (2) to perform the call of nature, (3) to sleep, (4) to talk with one another For sleep altogether six hours are sufficient.

Four things should be avoided with utmost care (1) No one should beg anything from anyone, one should not even state one's needs, which is another form of begging (2) *Ishrāf* also must be avoided Here someone does not beg with his tongue but he desires in his heart to obtain something for a certain bondsman; instead of begging with the tongue such a person begs in his heart (3) *Isrāf* also should be avoided. This means needless spending, which is reprehensible and damazing on all accounts Yet, usually its effects are especially adverse at the time when one has set out on the way of God, they are so, not only for the one who spends but also for the others (4) Nothing should be used without permission, including goods belonging to one's companions At times a person can be deeply vexed about his belongings being used in this way It is in fact strictly forbidden by the *sharīʿa*, whereas the use of one another's belongings after obtaining permission is permitted

These then are the absolutely necessary rules to be observed by you who set out on this way You have to spend all twenty-four hours observing these Implement them fully and thus walk God's earth, move about in his creation and ask him to guide you as well as the whole Muslim community (*umma*) and all humankind! This is your work and sacred duty If you act in this way, God the Most High, the Most Merciful of all the merciful will never disappoint you

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Notes

The Pontifical Council for Culture

One of the characteristic traits of Pope John Paul II is his concern for the world of culture and the Christian presence therein He believes that the future of the modern world will depend on the orientation culture will take He himself traces the roots of this concern to the many years he spent in the University milieu of Lublin [1] It is clear that for him the 'evangelization of culture' and the dialogue between culture and Gospel represent a very important dimension of the pastoral work of the Church

This preoccupation with Culture has been expressed by the Pope on many occasions. His most weighty pronouncement in this respect was perhaps his speech at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris on June 2nd, 1980 But the theme came back in addresses delivered at Rio de Janeiro (July 1st, 1980), Hiroshima (February 25th, 1981), and very recently in an important discourse at the University of Coimbra (May 15th, 1982) In fact, a long list could be established of pronouncements on Church and Culture made by the Pope since the beginning of this year One may wish that all these documents will one day be published together.

The Pope's interest in Culture culminated in the creation, on May 20th this year, of a permanent Pontifical Council for Culture which is to deal with the various forms of relationship between the Church and Culture The new Council is in the line of the various structures of dialogue created in Rome around the time of Vatican II · the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity (1960), the Secretariat for non-Christians (1964), the Secretariat for non-Believers (1965), and the Commission 'Justice and Peace' (1967)

One will note that the new structures correspond to major areas of concern expressed in the documents of Vatican II But the important section of *Gaudium et Spes* on Culture (Part II, chapter II)[2] had so far remained without a specific organ of animation. The new Council will make good this lacuna Its basic terms of reference will

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1 See for instance the beginning of the discourse at the University of Coimbra, in *Osservatore Romano*, English edition, 5 July, 1982, p 6

2 It is worth noting that Cardinal Wojtila was a strong supporter of the "Schema XIII" (later *GS*) from the early period of its gestation His interventions on the question of culture during the Council pleaded for a better understanding of culture in the light of faith, the text of the Council document should show not only the development of culture but how it is basic for man because it touches on his relation to the whole universe and leads to the development of his personality He also pleaded in favour of so-called pre-scientific cultures and pointed out that *wisdom* which is available to all peoples, is the basis of culture Cf *Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II*, III, 5, pp 298-314, IV, 1, p 543 (E/3080), IV, 3, pp 349-350.

surely be both the relevant section of *Gaudium et Spes* and the speech at the UNESCO. We give below the most important sections of the Pope's letter to Cardinal Casaroli, Secretary of State, signed on the feast of the Ascension, 20th May 1982, which institutes the new Council and spells out its objectives.[3]

"Since the beginning of my pontificate I have considered the Church's dialogue with the cultures of our time to be a vital area, one in which the destiny of the world at the end of this twentieth century is at stake There in fact does exist a fundamental dimension capable of strengthening or shaking to their foundations the systems into which mankind as a whole is organized, and of liberating human existence, individually and collectively, from the threats that hang over it This fundamental dimension is man in his totality (*integralité*) Man lives a fully human life thanks to culture "Yes, the future of man depends on culture", as I said in my speech to the UNESCO on 2nd June 1980, speaking to an audience which was so diversified in background and convictions. And I added "We meet each other in the field of culture, a basic reality that unites us .. We meet thereby around man and, in a certain sense, in man " "

Here the Pope recalls various steps he has taken to study the question of the Holy See's responsibility towards culture a consultation with the Sacred College of Cardinals in November 1980, another with the heads of the Roman dicasteries in December 1980, a special council to study the problem, set up in November 1981 under the direction of Cardinal Garrone, and the work done by this body

"The time has come to profit from these labours. For this reason, it seems to me opportune to found a special permanent body for the purpose of promoting the great objectives which the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council proposed regarding the relations between the Church and culture In fact, by giving it a whole section in the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, the Council emphasized the fundamental importance of culture for the full development of man, the manifold links between the message of salvation and culture, the reciprocal enrichment of the Church and the different cultures as they have shared history with different civilizations, as well as the necessity for believers to understand in depth the ways of thinking and feeling of other men of their time, as these are expressed in their respective cultures (*Gaudium et Spes*, 53-62)

Later, recalling his important speech at the UNESCO on the 2nd of June 1980 the Pope says

"There exists an organic and constitutive link between Christianity and culture — and, therefore, with man in his very humanity This link between the Gospel and man is in fact "creative of culture at its very foundations" And if culture is that by which man as such becomes more man, what is at stake in it is the very destiny of man. Hence the importance for the Church, whose concern it is, of a careful and far-sighted pastoral activity with regard to culture, and in a particular

3 The text is found in *Osservatore Romano*, English edition, 28 June, 1982, pp 7, 20. Some corrections are introduced here in the light of the French version, published in *Documentation catholique*, 20 June, 1982, pp 604-606

way with regard to what is called living culture, that is, the whole complex of principles and values which make up the ethos of a people. "The synthesis between culture and faith is demanded not only by culture but also by faith.. . A faith which does not become culture is a faith which has not been fully received, not thoroughly thought through, not faithfully lived out", as I said on 16 January, 1982 (Discourse to the Participants at the National Congress of the Movement for Cultural Commitment) " "

"For this reason I have decided to found and institute a Council for Culture, capable of giving the whole Church a common impulse in the continuously renewed encounter between the salvific message of the Gospel and the plurality of cultures, in the diversity of peoples to which the Gospel must bring its fruits of grace."

The Council will consist of a Presidential Committee, an Executive Committee, and an International Council, made up of qualified representatives of Catholic Culture throughout the world, which will meet at least once a year. It will be related to the Pope through the Secretariat of State Experience will show the way for further defining its future structure [4]

"The Council will pursue its ends in an ecumenical and brotherly spirit, promoting also dialogue with non-Christian religions, and with individuals or groups who do not profess any religion, in a joint search for cultural communication with all men of good will."

"It will regularly report to the Holy See on the major cultural aspirations of today's world, researching the expectations of contemporary civilizations and exploring new ways of cultural dialogue (Its) tasks, in general outline are,

1 To give witness, before the Church and the world, to the deep interest which the Holy See has, by its specific mission, in the progress of culture and fruitful dialogue between cultures, as well as in their beneficial encounter with the Gospel

2 To participate in the cultural concerns which the Departments of the Holy See encounter in their work, in such a way as to facilitate the coordination of their tasks in the evangelization of cultures, and to ensure cooperation between the cultural institutions of the Holy See,

3. To enter into dialogue with the Episcopal Conferences, with the aim, among others, of drawing benefit for the whole Church from the researches, initiatives, achievements and creations which allow the local Churches to take an active part in their own cultural environment.

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4 The *Osservatore Romano* (Italian edition), 21-22 May, announces the following nominations To the Presidential Committee Cardinal G -M Garrone, till recently Prefect of the S Congregation for Catholic Education (President), Cardinal E de Araujo Sales, Archbishop of Rio de Janeiro, and Mgr P Poupard, President of the Secretariat for Non-Believers To the Executive Committee Mgr P Poupard (President), Mgr A M Javierre Ortas, SDB, Secretary of the S Congregation for Catholic Education (Counsellor), Fr Hervé Carrier, S J, President of the International Federation of Catholic Universities (Secretary) Nominations of members of the Council remain to be made

4 To collaborate with international Catholic organizations of a university, historical, philosophical, theological, scientific, artistic and intellectual nature, and to promote their reciprocal cooperation

5 In a fashion appropriate to it, and always excepting the specific competencies of other bodies in the Curia in this matter, to keep up with the activities of international bodies, beginning with the UNESCO and the Cultural Cooperation Council of the Council of Europe, which are interested in culture, the philosophy of science and the human sciences, and to ensure the effective participation of the Holy See in international congresses concerned with science, culture and education.

6 To keep in touch with the politics and cultural activities of the various Governments of the world which are legitimately concerned to give a fully human dimension to the promotion of the common good of the men for whom they have responsibility.

7. To facilitate Church-culture dialogue at the level of universities and research centres, organizations of artists and specialists, researchers and scholars, and to promote worthwhile meetings between these cultural groups

8. To welcome to Rome representatives of culture interested in a better understanding of the Church's activities in this field, and in benefiting the Holy See with their rich experience, by offering them in Rome a meeting place for dialogue."

* * *

In order that the theology of culture which is in the mind of John Paul II may be better understood, we reproduce below a few sections of his Discourse at the University of Coimbra [5]

"Culture, in its deepest reality, is nothing but the special way a people has of cultivating its own relations with nature, among its members, and with God, so as to reach a truly human level of life, it is the 'common life-style' which characterizes a specific people (*GS*, 53) "

"In proposing her ideal for human existence, the Church does not pretend to deny the autonomy of culture On the contrary, she nourishes the greatest respect for it, as she nourishes the greatest respect for man. For the sake of both she defends free initiative and autonomous development For, since culture immediately derives from the rational and social nature of man, it constantly needs the right freedom and legitimate autonomy to act according to its own principles, in order to develop It stands to reason, therefore—the right of the person and of the particular and universal community being safeguarded, as is obviously required — that culture needs an inviolable space, that it ought to be respected and to be able to preserve its independence from political and economic forces (cf *GS*, 59)."

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5 Text in *Osservatore Romano* (English edition), 5 July, 1982, pp 6-7, *Documentation catholique* (6 June, 1982), pp 547-550.

"However, history teaches us that man and the culture that he builds up, may abuse the independence to which both have a right Culture, just as its author, may fall into the temptation of claiming for itself absolute independence in the face of God. It may even reach the point of turning against him For us who have the happiness of believing in God, this does not happen without causing harm."

"The Church is aware of this fact It is — you well know, ladies and gentlemen — part of a perennial struggle between good and evil And the Church is called, by her nature, to point out the good and to fight and uproot the evil She has received from Christ the mission of saving man from evil, concrete man, historical man, man with his whole being exterior and interior, individual and social, spiritual, moral and cultural And one of the ways for fulfilling this mission of the Church is to promote culture, understood both as formation of the person and as the spiritual texture of society "

"Therefore, from the Church's standpoint culture is not something extraneous to faith, but can receive deep and beneficial influences from it Nevertheless, we must not consider the relationship of culture to faith as purely passive Culture is not only a subject to be redeemed and elevated, it can also play a role of mediation and collaboration In fact, God, in revealing himself to the Chosen People, made use of a particular culture, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, did the same his human incarnation was also a cultural incarnation "

" 'Similarly the Church, who in the course of time has lived through varied circumstances, has made use of the resources of various cultures in order to spread and explain Christ's message in her preaching to all nations, to examine and understand it more thoroughly and to express it more aptly in her liturgical celebrations' (*GS*, 58) "

"In our times, without surrendering her tradition, but conscious of her universal mission, the Church endeavours to enter into dialogue with the diverse forms of culture She seeks to discover whatever, in the magnificent patrimory of the human spirit, makes for unity And, though harmony between culture and faith is not always achieved without difficulty, the Church does not desist from seeking to draw closer to all cultures, to all ideologies and to all men of good will "

G. G-S

Association for Islamic Studies

Reflections on a Meeting

On the second and third of January ten priests, seven sisters, one brother, one seminarian and two laymen, in addition to two priests from abroad, met at Navjyoti Niketan, Patna, to share their experiences of working with Muslims and make some plans for the future The group came from as far North as Kashmir, East as Calcutta, South

as Dindigul and West as Bombay. It was the second general body meeting of the Association for Islamic Studies (AIS), the first having been held in Agra in March, 1979. It is not the purpose of this note to give a report of that meeting — one can be found in *JAMI Notes*, the AIS quarterly — but to reflect on the meeting itself, trying to draw some general principles from the sharing and suggestions of the participants.

There was a significant awareness of the need of a holistic approach in any work with the Muslims of India This means that their present life-situation in India has to be the milieu of any such work, no matter how seemingly Islamic it may appear Any attempt to isolate Muslims from their Indian milieu and deal exclusively with them is doomed to failure, no matter what short-term appeal such an approach may have This fact precludes any type of approach which might be dubbed "clinical" Unlike researchers in their laboratories who can isolate and deal exclusively with the item selected for research, Christians have to realize that such a form of control is completely beyond their power In North India especially the so-called "communal problem" is a vivid reminder, in the ghastly faces it displays, of the complicated and often precarious existence of the Muslims Hence the Christian is forced, by the very reality confronting him or her, to adopt the posture of a servant Such a posture has the great advantage of placing the Christian fairly and squarely beside Jesus Christ, who also came, not to organize and lord it over people, but to serve them.

The complicated and seemingly overwhelming situation has the added advantage, for the Christian realist, of forcing him or her to trust and hope in God rather than in activities undertaken, though these should always be subjected to discerning reflection It is also a corrective to any form of jingoism, of becoming completely at one with a group, prejudices and all While growing in a sympathetic appreciation of the difficulties of the group, the Christian realist will be aware of the fact that there is another side to the picture This in turn fosters more realistic thinking on his part for it prevents him or her from being be sucked into the quagmire of polarization and enables him or her to follow the multitudes who instinctively follow the path of moderation Indeed, it is the common good of all the citizens of India that has to be sought and, if for one reason or another, some people give special emphasis to Muslims it is because they see areas in which they need special help, just as others are inspired to work for other groups in need, such as the harijans

Listening carefully to people sharing their different activities for the Muslims, one criterion of their apostolic effectiveness emerged Did they, in actual fact, respond to a felt need of the Muslims ? The needs of individual Muslims, of groups and of the whole community, are multiform and one can expect a legitimate multiformity in the Christian response On the one hand, one Christian might be helping a nine-year old Muslim girl to get a belated admission into a school, while another might be grappling with the problems of modernity, secularism and minority status confronting the Muslims of India,

attempting to shed light on Muslim responses to these problems by penetrating studies of Muslim authors. If some felt need is being attended to, the Christian will find out about it. For example, the joy of the young girl in getting admitted to a school, or the generally voiced appreciation in Muslim scholarly circles of the services of a particular Christian intellectual are confirmation that a felt need is being met. When signs of appreciation are not forthcoming, a person has serious grounds for questioning his or her work It could be, of course, that a person is seeking appreciation and this is the inspiring force of his or her efforts Failure and frustration can be confidently predicted in such instances for the activity is not directed, ultimately, to meeting another's need but to fulfil a person's own need for appreciation. Hence considerable maturity and personal freedom are prerequisite conditions for fruitful activity in this apostolate. Much preparation is also presupposed This is easily appreciated in the instance of the scholar who can only write meaningfully after long years of study, but much is also implied in helping a young Muslim girl get admission

Somebody might object to the above-mentioned criterion and refer to opposition and lack of response as Gospel-given indications, highlighted in the lives of so many saints, and often culminating in persecution, as signs of a supernaturally fruitful apostolate The cruel death of Jesus is pointed to as positive proof of the truth of such a supernatural outlook While such opposition can be freely admitted, along with its painful consequences, it is quite misleading and false to say that this is the whole story of the response of people in general to Jesus and the saints Think, for a moment, of the crowds of people who came thronging to Jesus to hear him speak and experience his healing power and who went away, their hearts filled with gratitude and their lips singing his praises Vested interests saw there a threat to their own position and plotted to remove him from the scene One would expect an authentic Christian apostolate to be crowned with appreciation by those people whose needs were met and, inevitably, by some opposition on the part of those who saw their own position or authority being endangered

It was apparent to the experienced observer that the expectations of the group in the whole matter of response had signalled a change in the Church's attitude. Up until ten years ago the present writer has travelled in various parts of North India on a study project connected with Islamic architecture It was amazing to hear the opinion of priests about working for Muslims, for most used almost the identical same words to express their opinion "What are you wasting your time for, you'll never convert a Muslim !" Anchored in this myopic assertion, the Church in North India was content to let the Muslims remain behind their *pardah* Only two of the twenty-three participants, however, displayed a conversion-oriented outlook. This does not mean to say that the twenty-one others were indifferent to whether Muslims became Christians or not, but rather that they considered that this was their affair, their concern, while it was encumbent upon us to reach out in Christian love to be of service to them, thus making the Father's love tangible to them. One can reflect on the reaction

of the crowds flocking around Jesus himself Did not the vast majority return home "praising God", while very few actually took to following Jesus ? Surely a Christian's responsibility is to love others, not dictate to them how they should run their lives ? If somebody is inspired to accept Jesus as his or her Lord and Saviour, then, of course, the Christian is bound to assist such a person take the appropriate steps.

It was interesting to notice that, at the pastoral level, the big concern was that of mixed marriages Many cases could be cited, from various parts of India, of Muslim boys marrying Christian girls and then preventing them from going to Mass or observing the other practices of the Christian religion This causes a great deal of ill-will among the whole Christian community in question, from the priest down, towards the local Muslim community If the priest had some rapport with the local Muslim leadership he could go and protest, but usually he has no contact whatsoever with such people, and it is odious to make one's first approach to reproach them What is even sadder is that this is directly against the practice of Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam, who allowed his Christian Coptic concubine, Mariya, to remain Christian At any rate, Muslims need to have the heavy price of general animosity for the actions of a few pointed out to them Moreover, any forcible restraint in this matter is directly against the secular spirit of the Indian Constitution

When it came to suggestions for the future it was instructive to notice a certain polarity of approaches At one end was what might be termed a "broadcast mentality" and at the other a "cooperative effort" The former is quite keen on supplying information about Christ, while the latter aims at a Christ-like presence This means actively and as effectively as possible sharing their faith and, in turn, being enriched and urged on by their response, being seekers as well as sharers The emphasis was more in this latter direction, which is encouraging.

These are simply the reflections of one participant at the AIS meeting Others might have quite different remarks to make Still, all the observations seem to point to the need of realizing that any apostolate among Muslims is really a question not merely of helping but also of being helped along the Way to God, a Way enlightened by the Truth and made real by the Life that emanates from Jesus Christ himself

Paul JACKSON, S.J.

Correspondence

Dear Editor,

I am a busy man, yet I feel I should write to you to express my high appreciation of the article of Fr A Van Exem, S J, on The Tribal Church and the Evangelization of Hindu India It is indeed an excellent, well thought-out, article, which gives the balanced view of an experienced missionary I found it very encouraging indeed Yes, the talk should not be Tribals and Confrontation with , but Christian Tribals and Fraternization with This will show that they have the *Caritas Christi*

I have not always, but I have at least sometimes, written my sentiments of appreciation to authors of various articles appearing in VIDYAJYOTI, which I read regularly In the past I used to read *Ad Paganos*, edited by the Scholastic theologians of Kurseong, and as a young raw missionary I greatly benefitted by the articles given there, as also by the experiences narrated there by missionaries of experience That has stood me in good stead during my missionary life Several articles in THE CLERGY MONTHLY also helped me greatly The VIDYAJYOTI articles have also been a great help to me, v g , Fr Gispert-Sauch's article on "OM" A leading Sadhu, who was antagonistic to us, has turned friendly realizing that Christ has come to fulfil and not to destroy, as our adoption of OM has shown him This is OM adopted from a practical point of view, as I represented in the CBCI meeting in Ranchi

I would appreciate other studies and articles like the one of Fr Van Exem Here are some suggestions Our City Christians and Evangelization, Our City Priests and Evangelization, Our Various Communities (be they backward or otherwise) and Evangelization Considering the present times and circumstances in India — I am talking from my experiences in crowded trains, my waiting for hours at bus stands and railway stations, when I jostle with the crowds and hear their daily talk — I feel that *Nunc est acceptabile tempus* Some of my young zealous missionaries are corroborating what I say, and others working far away from our area have told me the same I hope my suggestions will fit into the editorial policy of VIDYAJYOTI

Well, I just wanted to tell my appreciation of Fr Van Exem's article I am afraid I have written more

With kind regards,
Yours devotedly in Christ,

Bishop's House,
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C GOMES, S J
Bishop of Ahmedabad

Dear Editor,

I would kindly request VIDYAJYOTI to clarify certain points of liturgical inculturation which are obscure and provoke intense reactions among the people of God

The other day I took round the city of Ahmedabad a missionary priest from North India We visited our Catholic institutions We prayed for a while in a recently built church, a genuine architectural gem When I left the chapel he said "How can you have a Hindu religious symbol like OM in a Christian chapel? Do they know the real meaning of OM? That Sanskrit syllable is an abomination in a Christian Church "

He went on to explain that OM has a definite sexual connotation. Whatever meaning it may have for the simple folk, for the initiated Hindu OM represents the sexual union of Shiva and his consort. He had learnt this, he assured me, from

Hindus who had every reason to know its authentic — though for many secret — meaning

This is not, of course, the first time I have heard a pejorative interpretation of that religious symbol

Since this priest seemed to be quite conversant with Hindu thinking and practice, I asked him whether celebrating Mass sitting crosslegged on the floor — which I often do — is proper, i e, whether it is a right step towards the inculturation of Christian liturgy He agreed that this sitting posture is appropriate for prayer Hindus do pray in this way and use the same posture to offer anjali and what we might call lesser sacrifices But to offer a *mahā yajña* they keep standing

If this is correct, it would follow that, within the framework of a wise and rightly understood inculturation, sitting cross-legged on the floor would be a suitable posture for prayer, but it would not be correct for the priest to offer the sacrifice of the Mass in this posture The proper posture here is standing

I thought that this might be a biased view of an ultra-orthodox and overzealous missionary So I asked an educated Brahmin convert to throw some light on the matter He told me that OM certainly evokes a strong religious feeling in those who pronounce this sacred syllable As for its meaning, he explained that OM stands for Shiva, in fact, as a symbol, it is identical with the *lingam* Then again he confirmed that for prayer and lesser sacrifices sitting on the floor is the usual posture, but that the offering of the *mahā yajña* should be done in a standing position

A third point I would like to be commented upon is the following From the little personal experience I have and from what I have heard from others, converts from Hinduism establish a firm separation between their original religious practice, especially in worship, and their newly adopted Christian practices If I may be allowed to express this concept in terms borrowed from agriculture and gardening, their conversion, at the affective level, would not be a transplant from the Hindu soil to the Christian soil whereby the integrity of the plant, especially its roots, is preserved, but a severing of the Hindu religious roots in order to cast newly developed roots in the Christian soil Applying this concretely to the liturgy, they would prefer a liturgy distinctly Christian, where anything that smacks of Hinduism is carefully avoided They would object to anything that reminds them of a past they have effectively and affectively rejected

In the reverse case of "Christians" who "convert" to Hinduism, or — let us put it this way — who experiment with Hinduism, the same radical procedure can be observed Foreigners will put their cultural and religious past behind — in most cases only for a while — and adopt a fully Hindu way of life, without any attempt at inculturation, even in externals, even in liturgy They will, for instance, don saffron, shave their heads, hang their beads ostentatiously round their necks, they will go through the streets chanting "Hare Krishna, Hare Ram"

All of which, I feel, cautions us against adopting Hindu forms of worship too hurriedly and without sufficient discrimination One thing is abundantly clear. the language of our liturgy should be understood by the people, and should, therefore, be the vernacular Beyond that, shouldn't the distinctness, the "differentness" (apologies for the neologism) of Christian worship be scrupulously preserved? If some of the religious Christian symbols are not clearly perceived and understood by converts or by the faithful in general, isn't that part of the element of "mystery" which is always present in our relationship with God?

While we try to transplate into Christian idiom some of the Hindu forms of worship, the all-important question we should ask ourselves is, it seems to me, the following *Cui bono*? Whom is it going to help? Is the assimilation of Hindu religious symbols meant for those "old Christians" who feel very much at home in the traditional form of worship? Or do we have in mind converts from Hinduism and are we trying to facilitate their passing over to a Christian milieu? If this is the case, we should ask them how they feel about it. Or are we thinking perhaps of the Hindus who might gradually develop some affinity with, or attraction towards, Christianity if they see Christian worship expressed through Hindu religious symbols? Again we should ask them To proceed from a priori premises might lead us to highly debatable conclusions, and this, in a matter that affects intensely the people of God.

To summarise, I would request VIDYAJYOTI to offer us the views of some recognized expert in Hinduism on these three points 1) What does OM mean to Hindus, both the initiated and the uninitiated? Is it proper to display the OM symbol in our churches and chapels? 2) Is it proper for a priest to offer the sacrifice of the Mass sitting cross-legged on the ground? 3) Whom do we have in view when we profess to integrate or translate Hindu forms of worship into our Christian liturgy? *Cui bono?*

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Pablo GIL, S J

NOTE. The queries of our correspondent will be answered in one of the forthcoming issues of VIDYAJYOTI (Ed).

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the modern scientific, evolutionistic and universalist consciousness He represents the man of the new era Moreover, while Dante's outlook is limited to *individualist salvation, Sri Aurobindo is* not satisfied with individual liberation but, more dynamically, seeks cosmic salvation But one wonders if he has been able to influence modern world consciousness in the way Dante influenced European culture Perhaps our modern world is ideologically too fragmented to make that possible At any rate, as the author says at the end of her study, "the intention was not to debate and decide which is the greater epic Dante and Sri Aurobindo attained two different orders of experiences, but each is a laureate of the Divine and each in his own way The greatness of Dante has been established over the centuries beyond disputation Dante spoke of Virgil as the ultimate poet He honoured the author of the *Aeneid*, studied his style, but beyonded Virgil by producing an epic *that spoke to his contemporaries* in accents they could understand In the same way, Sri Aurobindo had great admiration for the poetry and personality of Dante and praised the Italian poet in many places As Dante beyonded Virgil, Sri Aurobindo extended that theological universe of Dante in the light of modern knowledge and his own spiritual experiences, and wrote a cosmic epic that speaks in accents that *we* can understand and appreciate" (p 153) I find the comparison between the two poets enlightening and helpful in better appreciating both of them

G GISPERT-SAUCH, S J

Book Reviews

Fundamental Theology

Fundamental Theology By Gerald O COLLINS, S J *London, Darton, Longman and Todd*, 1981 Pp 283 £ 5 99

Fr O'Collins has been writing on areas of Fundamental Theology for the past dozen years (cf VIDYAJYOTI 1969, p 186, 1974, p 375, 1975, pp 96 and 514, 1976, p 239, to which could be added *Foundations of Theology*, published in Chicago, 1971) In the present work he gives a clear and useful outline of a course on Fundamental Theology, covering the areas of Revelation and Faith, Tradition and Biblical Inspiration In "A Personal Epilogue" (pp 260-263) the author himself reviews his work and identifies three characteristic themes revelation as exprience, the distinction between foundational revelation (with its climax in the Apostolic Church) and dependent revelation, and the link between practice and theory, though, as I see it, this last theme is not stressed so much To the list, on the other hand, should be added a strong affirmation of the distinction between general and special history of revelation and salvation Among the lacunae of the work the author points to the scant attention he has paid to the theme of verification and credibility of revelation, and to the omission of the question which he considers valid, of the inspira, tion of non-Biblical scriptures

As can be expected from O'Collins, the treatment is articulate and touches on many of the modern trends, but without getting lost in technical language and abstraction I personally think that the first chapter on the nature of theology lacks in conformity with the rest of the book and is based on a very Western concept of *philosophy* The chapter on Experience is important and deserves much reflection, though I am not sure that *all* experience is religious, a statement that does not seem to leave room for secular experience I also think that the teaching of Vatican I on the knowledge of God through reason cannot simply be identified with the (biblical) idea of the revelation of God in nature this already speaks of a personal knowledge *of* God, while reason by itself will not lead beyond a knowledge *about* God In general there is perhaps a propensity to seek equivalences which, on closer scrutiny, turn out to be rather shaky This applies especially to the application of the temporal schema (past-present-future) to various aspects of faith, exegesis, etc The author seems to be aware of this danger (cf "A Coda", pp 152-156) On the whole, however, the book will greatly profit students of Fundamental Theology, not least because of the useful bibliographical *references it gives, largely in English*

G GISPERT-SAUCH, S J

Pastoral Education

The Making of a Pastoral Person By Gerald R NIKLAS *New York, Alba House, 1981* Pp xi-159 $ 5 95

Niklas, an experienced pastor and supervisor in clinical pastoral education for many years, raises questions which those engaged in formation of sisters, brothers and priests encounter He reflects on the necessary ingredients for effective pastoral ministry Pastoral *education must start from and* be based on, the knitty-gritty of life It has to do with relationships, experiences, reflection and evaluation, emotionality, integration and decision-making The author explains each of these points in concise terms in relation to pastoral ministry

One significant area for the development of one's pastoral identity is one's feelings How do pastors handle their own feelings and those of their clients ? If one does not feel comfortable with one's feelings, one will be hampered in understanding others The author's discussion of anger and its constructive use is rewarding While discussing authority in pastoral ministry, he insists on a liberated and integrated sense of authority Sexuality is another area in which pastors should be well integrated to minister effectively Niklas discusses briefly Erikson's eight stages of

growth of the human person and correlates them to theological perspertives These stages can serve as a pastorally useful model for the understanding of people in different stages of life Speaking of spirituality, Niklas makes clear that pastors who are 'familiar' and comfortable with God can alone be a source of valuable guidance to people in their relation to God

The book can prove very helpful to priests, deacons, religious or lay people However, it is somewhat confined to a clinical pastoral approach without paying sufficient attention to wider themes and demands of the pastoral ministry such as community, ministry of justice, etc , in the perspectives opened up by the constitution *Gaudium et Spes* of Vatican II

S AROKIASAMY, S J

Prayer

Dynamics of Prayer Towards a Theology of Prayer in the Light of Paul Tillich's Theology of the Spirit By Sebastian PAINADATH, S J *Bangalore, Asian Trading Corporation*, 1980 Pp xxii-390 Rs 40

In this scholarly synthesis Fr Painadath, basing himself on the writings of Paul Tillich, shows how prayer is at the centre of the encounter between God and man and the key moment in the process of theological reflection Tillich has not written a systematic treatise on prayer But there are enough elements in his works to build up a sythesis, which Painadath has done competently

What strikes one is the 'Eastern' flavour that runs through the whole book Transcending through a method of dialectic correlation the usual dichotomies between religion and culture, man and God, essence and existence contemplation and action history and the Kindgom, Tillich evokes a unified vision of the universe in which man is borne up and forward, on the wings of the dynamic movement of the divine Spirit, towards a mystic experience of union. Prayer thus becomes man's participation in this cosmic process towards fulfilment In this vast sweep whatever is personal and historical seems to be submerged Tillich's own idea of symbol, if well exploited, could have saved him from this. The central role of Christ as the privileged moment of divine-human encounter and the action of the Spirit that energises the process of history ensures a Christian and Trinitarian flavour to the cosmic vision A greater familiarity with the East, especially India, would have added depth to this vision The possibility for man of an ecstatic response raises him beyond secular culture and founds, incidentally, the reality of prayer

I shall not attempt the impossible task of summarising the highly synthetic and systematic presentation of Painadath He has done it himself in his book (pp 251-254) He follows up this summary with a personal critique Eleven selected prayers of Tillich are given in an appendix These illustrate Tillich's theory and confirm Painadath's analysis An extensive bibliography and indices of names and subjects enhance the usefulness of the book

M AMALADOSS, S J

Prema Yoga The Realization, of Love By SATYANVESHI Nellore, Bishop's House 1981 Pp xviii-217 Rs 12

This is a simple and rich book on spirituality presented one year ago by a young priest on the occasion of his ordination It shows how love is the key both to psychological health and spiritual growth, it is the highest of all yogas The author quotes abundantly from Eastern and Western sources and is much influenced by Teilhard de Chardin A book that can be shared with seekers of any religion, who will find in it substantial spiritual food

G GISPERT-SAUCH, S J

Eastern Liturgy

"Der von dir, Vater, ausgeht und von deinem Sohne nimmt". Der Heilige Geist im Beten der Syro-Antiochenischen Kirche By Johannes MADEY *Paderborn Verlag Bonifacius-Druckerei*, 1980 Pp 155 DM 8 80

In 1971, Fr Émmanuel-Pataq Siman a dominican priest belonging to the Syrian Catholic patriarchate of Antioch, published a remarkable thesis in French entitled (in translation) "The experience of the Spirit by the Church according to the Syrian tradition of Antioch" (Paris, Beauchesne) It revealed how rich in theological expressions was the liturgy of the Syrian patriarchate, above all in expounding the role of the Holy Spirit in the Church

Inspired by Fr Emmanuel's contribution, Dr Madey has gathered the

most relevant liturgical texts on the Holy Spirit from the liturgical books of the Antiochene Church The first part contains in German translation nearly the whole of the office for Pentecost Sunday, Monday, Tuesday and for the following Sunday A second section contains significant extracts from the various sacramental rites and from various offices

The translations are on the whole quite satisfactory, they even succeed on occasion to recapture the highly poetical character of the original Syriac A glossary of Syriac-German terms, and a list of Syriac composers of liturgical poetries happily conclude this small but precious book

E R HAMBYE, S J

Mysticism and Mysticisms

Struggle and Submission R C Zaehner on Mysticisms By William Lloyd NEWELL *Washington, D C, University Press of America*, 1981 Pp xviii-383 $ 12 75

R C Zaehner, for over a score of years (1953-74) professor of history of religions in Oxford, made his mark by his many writings on mysticism Deeply acquainted with the literary sources of most major world religions — Zoroastrianism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity not to speak of Marxism and the Drug culture — he became an articulate defender of the variety of mysticisms in the history of humanity This book is a study of Zaehner's contribution to a scientific study of mysticism by his sympathetic but not uncritical student It underscores Z's fight against the "bland assumptions of the *philosophia perennis*" represented by Huxley and many writers on mysticism from India and elsewhere, who would claim that all mystical experience, even perhaps the experiences of the drug culture, are basically the same The author shows how Z, by studying the texts as they come to us, proves that in fact the experiences are different and irreducible to one another Not only theologies, but also "ecstasies are culturally mediated" (p xiii) So strong is the affirmation of difference that one would almost doubt the validity of bracketing these various experiences under one term, mysticism Perhaps unwittingly the author softens the sharp affirmation of differences when he says that "they are radically different as men are different from one another" (p 280) ! Basically three main types are analysed the mysticism of one-in-all or nature mysticism, wherein one breaks through the limits of individuality and recognizes oneself as part of the Universe, the mysticism of Isolation, the Sāmkhya-Yoga type, wherein one centres on the Self and relegates the rest of reality to the realm of illusion, and finally the mysticism of the theistic religions, whether Indian or Semitic, which is a mysticism of union rather than oneness, of solidarity rather than "solidity" (p 7)

The book gives not only a careful analysis of Z's contribution but also in a concluding chapter (pp 251-320) the author's own theological understanding of the place of various mysticisms and therefore of various world religions Where Z had spoken of types of mysticism, bracketing all theistic mysticisms in the same category, the author in this last chapter is more exclusivist and makes a sharp, almost Barthian, distinction between Christianity and other religions Thus the book is not only an affirmation of difference, which I think is valid and supported by the evidence, but also an apology for Christianity which will hardly convince the non-Christians I think that some dualities, amounting to oppositions, underly much of the argument in a way which many would challenge today nature and grace, the atman (self) and God, matter and spirit, experience and love/faith While accepting the validity of each mysticism, the author places them on totally different levels, and one fails to see any connection between the other mysticisms and the Christian perception of salvation Many theologians today will reject the thesis proposed here, but the challenge to take into consideration the data supplied to us by the mystics and to analyse them carefully needs to be heeded

A few typing errors have creeped in (the book is produced by offset) The language is American, the style often informal, and the author is aware that he tends to "homilize" (p 261) One howler should be corrected in the 40-page Index the *Cloud of Unknowing* is attributed to al-Ghazālī (p 350) !

G GISPERT-SAUCH, S J

Hindu-Christian Dialogue

Waters of Fire By VANDANA *Madras, The Christian Literature Society* 1981 Pp xxii-170 Rs 22

This book is the fruit of a long contemplative life Sr Vandana spends a good

part of her year in a *sādhanā kutīr* by the Ganges, at the foot of the Himalayas This and a long-standing predilection for St John have led to this meditation on the symbol of water in the various chapters of the Gospel The meditation is done within the specific context of the Indian religious tradition, with a stress both on the Vedantic religious world as interpreted by the Abhishiktananda school, and on popular Hinduism, specially alive on the banks of the holy Ganges Like the Upanishadic fish, the writer moves easily and smoothly from one side of the river to the other, from the Biblical and Christian world view to the Hindu No pedantic analysis of texts is here required, no historical studies or search for the *Sitz im Leben* just a quiet contemplation of what the sacred words and symbols suggest, not indeed in an obscurantist attitude, but with the freedom proper to the contemplative mood One could compare this to the Biblical and early Patristic meditations on the mystery of Jesus his reality is expressed in manifold ways through a free use of OT symbols, readings, expressions, that acquire a new resonance Sr Vandana goes through a similar process with the help of the Hindu tradition Not everybody will find himself equally comfortable within the Vedantic outlook exprsssed in these pages, Water itself may have many different connotations, including cataclysm, judgment, decision—not least the waters of the Ganges in their monsoon fury Different perceptions are possible and perhaps we touch here the valuable idea of *adhikāritva*—a specific personal and spiritual disposition is required to approach a particular guru or a text Those who have it will profit Others may just be disturbed or simply puzzled

The book contains three appendices, on water in the Vedic tradition, on the Ganges mythology and theology, and on the use of water in the traditional *sandhyā* (morning and evening prayers) Indian, theology is enriched by this new contribution from Sr Vandana

G GISPERT-SAUCH, S J

Dante and Sri Aurobindo A Comparative Study of *The Divine Comedy and Savitri* By Prema NANDAKUMAR *Madras, Affiliated East-West Press*, 1981 Pp viii-160 Rs 54

The comparison between the evolutionist philosophies of Aurobindo, the seer of Pondicherry and the Jesuit Teilhard de Chardin is well known. Aurobindo's poetic output, specially his great philosophical poem *Savitri* has been less studied, although the names of Iyengar, Gupta, Jacobs, Pandit,Purani and Sethna should not be forgotten in this connection Dr Prema Nandakumar has been in the field for many years and already in 1962 she presented the fruit of her doctoral and post-graduate research in *A Study of 'Savitri'* In this new book she continues the same line of research, gathering further contributions for a comparison between Dante's 15000 line *Divina Commedia* and Sri Aurobindo's 24000 line *Savitri* The comparison is by no means far-fetched and has a foundation in Sri Aurobindo's own study of his predecessor The author shows convincingly that the two great poets sum up the spiritual and cosmological views of their respective ages and take man to a journey through the realms of the spirit to the supreme vision, in the words of Dante's last line, to "the love that moves the sun and the other stars" In Savitri's old legend and the poem based on it, too love is the theme, the love of the faithful wife that conquers death But perhaps the vision is different in the two epics Sri Aurobindo ends the body of his great poem with "an ecstasy and a laughter and a cry" while "over wide earth brooded the *infinite bliss*" Only in the Epilogue, in the "Return to Earth", will Savitri know again that "to feel love and oneness is to live" For Sri Aurobindo salvation comes in the way of knowledge rather than of grace, he "has gone beyond the model of *The Divine Comedy* and replaced Dante's idea of sin and redemption by a symbol of striving and victory for the new man, an augury of great significance of the emergence of global understanding and unity" (p 62) Dr Nandakumar studies the similarities of the two works in style, structure, language, as well as in their general conception and their relation to their contemporary culture Even in the lives of the two political exiles, Dante and Sri Aurobindo, she finds parallels But she is also conscious of certain contrasts the background of Dante is the closed Mediterranean world and the theology of St Thomas which the author considers static and outmoded, Sri Aurobindo transcends easily his own Vedic background and reaches up to the world of

Continued on p 412

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Ashrams and Social Justice

OCTOBER 1982

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JOURNAL OF THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

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In This Issue

Speaking of the specific vocation of lay people to engage in secular activities and to insert into secular realities the values of the Gospel, the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* of Vatican II declared firmly: "It pertains to their conscience, properly formed, to write the law of God into the life of the earthly city. From priests, the laity should look for light and spiritual energy. However, they should not imagine that their pastors are always experts that can give an immediate and concrete answer for every problem, however complicated, that arises, or even that such is their mission" (*G.S*, n. 43). Moral guidance today cannot then consist, if it ever did, in priests dictating solutions to the people's problems Theology has always taught the unassailable role of conscience in moral decision But the complexity of moral issues today renders the task more difficult What then should Moral Guidance Today consist of ? This is the question which Fr G LOBO answers in an article from which, we are sure, every pastoral priest will derive much profit for his ministry.

Much has already been said and written to the effect that concientization of the oppressed masses, and in particular Harijan awakening, is, in the Indian context, part and parcel of the Church's evangelizing mission But are we fully consistent and willing to bring about the attitudinal and structural changes that are called for ? Seeking an answer to these questions, Fr J VELAMKUNNEL takes his clue in concrete issues that have recently affected the internal life of Christian communities How do Church leaders react when, having begun to grow unto themselves, Harijan Christians make new demands on their leaders ? Are we open to a participatory model of Church organization ?

The theme chosen for the 1983 Synod of Bishops in Rome is "Reconciliation and Penance in the Mission of the Church". A short article by Fr G. PATTERY reflects on the bearing of Paul's theology on the Synodal theme, to which we hope to return in a subsequent issue of VIDYAJYOTI. To complete the present number, Fr G. GISPERT-SAUCH contributes a Note for a Theology of Literacy, while, in a short piece entitled "The Ashram Movement and Social Justice", Sr Sara GRANT responds to the charge of "passive solidarity with Asia's poor and oppressed" recently voiced against ashrams.

Moral Guidance Today

George V. Lobo, S J.

New Situation

In the past people came to the pastor to have their moral problems 'solved'. The pastor readily gave a solution after a summary enquiry into the case It was thought that there was a clear cut answer to every problem although there might be some difficulty in finding it The prudent pastor did not fail to consult books and experts in more difficult cases, but he hardly doubted that an answer could be found

But now the situation has radically changed. The faithful are dissatisfied at the often conflicting answers coming from priests The priests themselves are puzzled by the increasing complexity of problems and the differences of opinions even among reputed theologians With the current ferment in Moral Theology, the average pastor would be hard put to it to determine what he has to say to people who approach him for moral guidance. Gone are the days when he could give a pat answer to every question Many people have just stopped consulting priests, but many others are still coming and even among those not coming, a good proportion would still want guidance from pastors if only they could get satisfactory help

This situation is at first sight quite disconcerting But it could also be looked upon as an opportunity for deepening the moral responsibility of the faithful and a renewal of moral guidance on the part of all those who exercise the pastoral role

The main factors that call for a new approach to moral guidance could be stated as follows·

1) There is now a greater realization of the baptismal consecration of the faithful and of their possession of the Spirit calling them to personal responsibility and giving them the basic capacity of discerning the will of God

2) The primacy of personal conscience is being widely affirmed, although often without much understanding of what it means.

3) The Christian call to freedom is also being realized, though there is need for grasping its true nature and for enabling the people to exercise it responsibly.

4) Every problem has its own existential and unique features. Besides, modern life in a rapidly changing society poses ever new and complex problems Hence ready-made solutions are unsatisfactory

5) Christians are becoming alert to the increasing urgency of the social problem. Individual sin is often a manifestation of sinful structures. For instance, even a honest person can hardly avoid getting involved in dubious business deals when corruption has become a deeply imbedded system. When there is urgent need for radical change in social structures, the traditional norms of justice may not always apply literally. That one may take goods in another's possession as occult compensation for what is owed to him was already admitted by traditional morality. But now the question of rightful ownership has become exceedingly complex with the awareness that the goods of the earth are primarily destined for the use of the whole human community.[1] On the negative side, we are now realizing that the violation of social justice or failing to contribute to social change may be a much more serious crime than petty thefts 'Social euthanasia' or contributing to the mass starvation of people through manipulation of prices is surely a more widespread evil than isolated cases of individual enthanasia or suicide

6) Modern psychology has uncovered the emotional or psychic factor in many moral problems It explains why even the best moral principles are inadequate to meet the challenges of life. This is because the possibility of an uninhibited moral response may be lacking Modern psychology also indicates the way of freeing the personality from unhealthy determinisms and inhibitions, thus freeing the will to respond to the call of God. Thereby, emotional maturity is seen as an important dimension of moral progress

7) Revived interest in the Bible as the primary source of all theology has brought out the positive character of Christian morality, which is not merely the avoidance of sin, but positive growth in human and Christian maturity

8) There is a strong ferment of change in Moral Theology. There is rethinking, not only regarding particular issues, but even of time-honoured principles like that of double effect. The traditional absolutes are being reexamined Even the very concept of moral absolutes is being called into question We have to face the fact that we are passing through a period of uncertainty. This need not breed scepticism or cynicism Rather, it can open the way to a more mature morality.

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1. *Gaudium et Spes*, nn. 69, 71.

Moral Mission of the Church

The role of the pastor can be understood properly only in relation to the overall moral mission of the Church. It is now clear that the Church does not have ready-made answers to the concrete problems of the world. This seems to be the true sense of the oft-quoted and much misunderstood text of Vatican II· "Christ, to be sure, gave his Church no proper mission in the political, economic or social order"[2] This does not mean that the Church has no role in these spheres since the Council itself continues to say: "But from (the) religious mission itself there derive a function, light and energy which can serve to build up and consolidate the human community according to the divine law."[3] It goes on to add that, when necessary, the Church is called upon to initiate activities on behalf of men

The Church shares in the common pilgrimage of the whole of humanity. "She is as the leaven and, so to speak, the soul of human society which is to be renewed in Christ and transformed into the family of God."[4]

The Church transcends in a certain way any human group or movements. As Vatican II puts it. "In virtue of her mission and nature", the Church "is not tied down to any particular form of human culture or to any political, economic or social system"[5] This does not imply any indifference or alienation. On the contrary, the Church is supposed to be the 'sacrament' or effective sign of the unity of mankind.[6] Hence "thanks to her universality she can be a very close link between the various human communities and nations"[7]

The Council draws from this principle some significant lessons that are very much needed. Christians cannot evade earthly tasks under the pretext of belonging to a spiritual community. "They are mistaken who, knowing that we have here no abiding city but seek one which is to come, think that they may therefore shirk earthly responsibilities....The Christian who neglects his temporal duties... endangers his eternal salvation."[8]

In this context, the respective role of the laity and the clergy is explained The Council affirms that "secular duties and activities belong properly, though not exclusively, to the laity."[9] Some have

2. *Gaudium et Spes*, n 42.
3 Ibid.
4 *Gaudium et Spes*, n 40.
5 *Gaudium et Spes*, n 42.
6. Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, n. 1.
7. *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 42.
8. *Gaudium et Spes*, n 43
9. Ibid.

concluded from this that priests are not to take an active part in politics. But the text can very well be understood to mean that the laity are called upon to involve themselves in every legitimate form of temporal activity while the clergy are to engage in this sphere according to their particular role of prophetic leadership in the Church. When there is special need, a priest could take up any position and any role helpful to the people.

Normally the priest's role is to inspire the right type of political activity Engaging in party politics or using clerical influence for partisan ends would not only jeopardise his proper mission but also give rise to clericalism from which the world has suffered enough.

The respective role of the clergy and laity in temporal affairs has been very well brought out by Vatican II: "It pertains to their (the laity's) conscience, properly formed, to write the law of God into the life of the earthly city. From priests, the laity should look for light and spiritual energy. However, they should not imagine that their pastors are always such experts that can give an immediate and concrete answer for every problem, however complicated, that arises, or even that such is their mission "[10] This is one of the strongest statements on the Christian responsibility of the lay person to act according to his/her well-founded conscience It points out that the role of the pastor is not to substitute for the personal conscience of the faithful but to enlighten and inspire it.

Formation of Conscience

An important characteristic of genuine Christian morality is the primacy of personal conscience as the immediate norm of morality. This was always admitted in principle in the Church, but has been largely neglected in practice. Now Vatican II has strongly reaffirmed it: "In the depths of his conscience, man detects a law which he did not make but which he must obey . . .For there is in man's heart a law written by God. His dignity lies in obeying it, and according to this law he will be judged. Conscience is the most secret core and sanctuary of man. There he is alone with God; there in his innermost self he perceives God's voice."[11]

The Council also draws attention to the fact that conscience frequently errs. In fact, no one is born with a ready-made conscience. Conscience develops slowly through the intrinsic dynamism of the person towards truth and also through various influences.

10. Ibid.
11. *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 16.

The pastor has a very important role to play in this matter. He can contribute significantly to the development of a right conscience among the faithful. He can also help a person to make conscientious decisions. While it is not for the pastor to take over the management of the conscience of others, neither will he help by merely saying: "Follow your conscience" After generations of passive acceptance of what the priest said, what can an ordinary Christian make out of this ? The meaning of conscience is far from clear to many. Besides, even a well-formed conscience often needs the support and guidance of others because of the very social nature of man.

The very word 'con-science', although originally referring to 'extensive knowledge', also suggests 'knowing together' or a partnership in discerning the will of God. That is why Vatican II speaks of corporate search for truth [12] In this search, the well-trained moral guide can render a significant service

Although each person is ultimately responsible for his decisions and actions, still he must act in solidarity with his brethren Moral doctrine is largely the time-tested wisdom and experience of the whole community. Christian morality is often clarified through the lived experience of Christians Every Christian in whom the Spirit dwells and operates, has to be involved in clarifying the Christian response to the demands of the Gospel regarding the different areas of life Hence there should be a balance between the autonomy of personal conscience and corporate discernment and responsibility The pastor who has himself a keen sense of moral values and a capacity for moral discernment can be of great help in this corporate discernment

The Magisterium, or the teaching authority of the hierarchy, must not be understood as an external imposition on the autonomy of the conscience, but as a service of guidance. The ordinary faithful are not able to keep in touch with the mass of Church documents; much less are they able by themselves to interpret their true meaning for their situation. Here the pastor can render a useful service. He will, however, do so only if he avoids the extremes of a literal or fundamentalist understanding of Church documents, on the one hand, and of indifference or disaffection, on the other. Priests should be aware that the laity rightly expect them to be sufficiently acquainted with the doctrinal and legal pronouncements of the Church. Many of them will also want priests to convey to them the genuine mind of the Magisterium in a way that is relevant and useful to their lives.

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12 Ibid.

Towards Mature Christian Conscience

A rightly formed conscience is characterized by four attributes: 1) It is *rational*, that is, able to assess people and situations objectively and without prejudice. It is able to grasp moral values and know how to pursue them in a given situation. It is cognisant of right moral principles and their application to a given situation. 2) It is *autonomous*, that is, able to make one's own decisions when necessary with the help of others. It is able to take a stand on vital issues in spite of opposition. 3) It is *altruistic*, that is, it is motivated by the needs and interests of one's fellowmen. It is able to decide to sacrifice self-interest for the sake of others when the occasion calls for it. 4) It is *responsible*, that is, able to accept the short term and long term consequences of a moral decision It is not misled by mere sentiment, either for oneself or others. It is able to accept the consequences of one's decision, even when they are not fully foreseen. That is, it is able to take calculated risks for a worthy cause.

No one expects a child to exhibit any of these four traits of moral maturity. We expect him to be irrational, dependent, self-centred and emotional Primarily, it is the parents' task to lead the child beyond these infantile traits. But the pastor can support their efforts and intervene more directly as soon as the child is able to participate in Church ceremonies and activities. Especially during adolescence, the pastor can play an important role in helping the parents to provide understanding and guidance in this difficult period of transition. He can directly help the growing person to pass through this critical phase of life by his enlightenment and sympathy The growing person must be directed to concentrate his attention, not so much on the failures he experiences in individual actions as on strengthening the basic direction (fundamental option) in which his relationship is moving. Current Moral Theology stresses the crucial importance of the fundamental option over against peripheral activity. It seems that it is during adolescence that one makes this basic choice, normally for the good. But it does not take place smoothly or all at once. It is only in an atmosphere of love and understanding, to which the pastor can contribute, that the young person will make a clear and strong option for the good so that all later behaviour will be significantly influenced by this decisive orientation.

Three Levels of Morality

Moral guidance or formation of conscience should take into account the three levels of morality which have been clearly identified by Louis Monden.[13]

13. *Sin, Liberty and Law*, London, Sheed and Ward, 1965.

1) *Level of Instinct*. Here we are in the sphere of the ***pre-conscience***. The *law* on this level comes from without, from the pressure of reality, and especially of society, which by means of taboos controls the impulse of the primitive drives in man. Although these controls are introjected and felt as binding, they are still experienced as alien and even hostile. An ambivalent fear of sanction against rebellion could be identified with the 'unconscious-conscience' or the *superego* of Freud. Even though Freudians call the unconscious mechanism of the super-ego 'conscience', this correlation of terms cannot be accepted by anyone who admits a personalistic ethic.

Early in life, the child absorbs, by a quasi-automatic process, modes of behaviour, acceptable and unacceptable, from his surroundings, especially from his parents He develops an instinctive response to the desirable and undesirable aspects of his thoughts and behaviour

Sin on this level is experienced as a material transgression of some prohibition or taboo The ensuing guilt feeling is irrational It is the spontaneous anxiety of being threatened by a mysterious power for having strayed beyond safe boundaries. *Contrition* becomes the instinctive urge to escape retribution and it looks for magical rites and formulae to placate the angered powers.

Many, these days, tend to mistake primitive drives and feelings for conscience When they say "we have to follow our conscience", they seem to think that one has to just follow one's impulses. The possibility that what they consider 'personal convictions or decisions' might be no more than blind urges does not occur to them.

2) *Moral (rational) Level*. *Law* here is function of self-development. The aspirations of the inner self appear to reason as absolute demand or moral obligation Here conscience is the power of discovering what will promote authentic self-realization. There is *sin* when one freely acts against the dictates of right reason. *Contrition* is the acknowledgement and regret for this deliberate deviation, with the active will for amendment Here we are already on the level of conscience and morality proper. But this level is still largely impersonal.

3) *Religious Level* Here the *law* is the invitation to go beyond the limits of one's own being towards loving self-donation. In fact it entails a higher and deeper self-realization. Obligation becomes a 'vocation', whose specific forms are in the line of the 'counsels' and 'beatitudes'. Conscience on this level is love itself as a power of discovering what can promote union with God and neighbour. It acts by connaturality rather than mere rational insight. It is the

working of the grace of the Holy Spirit. *Sin* and guilt are the *refusal to love,* to be for the other. *Contrition* is the awareness of infidelity of love with a confident appeal to the loving mercy of God.

In this perspective, formation of conscience consists in going beyond mere automatic reaction to the level of a conscious and free self-determination that is ultimately animated by divine love. The three levels coexist, even in the mature adult. But they must not be thought of as separated from each other like three storeys of a building. There is *inter-penetration* between them. The higher level rests on the lower levels as a substratum, assuming them into itself and imparting a new and higher significance to them. The growth of the moral life proceeds from predominantly instinctual to human self-development and finally culminates in religious self-donation. Hence due importance should be given to each level of conscience in moral formation and guidance.

Guidance on Emotional Level

Both the spontaneous feelings (*id*) and the introjected social controls and pressures (*superego*) are powerful forces that move or inhibit action Hence the importance of studying their workings. Spontaneous feelings must be refined and governed by higher levels of reason and love.

Development of the aesthetic sense is an important means for this. According to the time-honoured dictum of Aristotle, ultimately the Good, the True, the One and the Beautiful coincide. Pastors working for simple people have intuitively felt that music, dance and drama tend to elevate the moral and religious sense of the faithful. Today there is special need of being conscious of this factor. Traditional art forms are disappearing and the poor cannot easily cultivate the newer ones that are genuine. Hence the media are to be used, not so much to convey good moral lessons, as to refine the aesthetic, and thereby the moral sense of the people.

A certain influence of the superego or automatic control is necessary, even in the adult person. But this should not be excessive and it should be penetrated by the rational conscience (conscious control) and the dynamism of love It is very profitable to uncover the devious ways in which the superego functions and often vitiates the moral action of man, producing 'pseudo-virtues' instead of authentic moral growth. The many psychic defenses and escapes that are used to evade responsibility should be examined in order to foster authentic moral growth.

The distinction between the impersonal pressure of the superego and the personal call of God in the depths of the conscience is very important for a genuine moral life. The tyrannical rule of the super-ego calling for inexorable retribution can easily be transferred on to God, causing a grave distortion in religious upbringing.

Gregory Baum expresses this clearly: "The idea of God as a judge on a throne, meting out punishment, corresponds to a self-destructive trend of the human psyche....The person who is dominated by his superego — and no one is able to escape it altogether — has the accuser, judge and tormentor, all wrapt in one, built into his psychic make-up."[14]

The superego produces automatic guilt feeling whenever a taboo has been violated. The same is purged with equal certainty when a purificatory rite is accomplished Thereby one is led to think that the transition between grace and sin, and vice versa, can take place with great frequency and rapidity. Here we see the root of the mis-conceptions by which sacramental confession is often reduced to an automatic purificatory ritual instead of being a means of genuine reconciliation.

The vicious circle between failure, remorse and purgation is especially true in the area of sexuality, for instance, in the matter of masturbation The superego as such is ineffective in overcoming the urge to masturbate The disproportionate guilt feeling which often accompanies compulsive masturbation only causes deeper frustration and a fixation in the area The fear complex leads to further fall! Mechanical confession to a priest, understood only as an authority figure, brings only temporary relief. It sets the stage for a repetition of the process There is need for breaking out of the cycle by culti-vating a positive attitude and deepening inner freedom

It must be admitted that much of the traditional moral guidance has been directed to confirming the tyranny of the superego As John W. Glaser remarks: "The superego is far more infallible as a tormentor than as a source of effective motivation."[15] A certain type of cleri-calism may find satisfaction in paternalistic domination rather than pastoral inspiration Even if such an attitude may be effective in keeping the person on the right path externally, through superimposed authority, there will be a breakdown as soon as for some reason the imposition weakens We see this happening in the case of people who have been brought up in too rigid an atmosphere and who tend to give

14 *Man Becoming*, New York, Herder and Herder, 1970, pp. 223-224.
15. "Conscience and Superego. A Key Distinction", *Theological Studies* 32 (1971), p 43.

up all restraints when they experience a liberation from their traditional background.

There are some who look back with nostalgia on the certainties of bygone days and bewail the confusion that now seems to prevail all round. The superego has suddenly lost its traditional props and the primitive drives of the id seem to have broken out. Some would want to restore the authority of the superego in order to lock up the apparently destructive forces of the id. But this would be a vain enterprise in the present situation, even if it did not mean a regression. The only effective way of handling the problem is the development of a mature conscience. The pastor then should function not as a guardian of the superego but as a liberator of the conscience from psychic and legal determinisms.

Emotional tensions, inhibitions and compulsions are at the back of many moral problems These are not immediately amenable to a moral guidance in which the rational element predominates. There is the need first of attending to the emotional problem through pastoral counselling. This consists in facilitating the expression of feelings by means of empathetic listening in a spirit of understanding and acceptance. Moral insight will come only when an emotional release has taken place and there is strength to face life. The counsellor has to adopt a non-judgmental attitude The person has to be accepted as he is in spite of the weaknesses or even grave moral lapses he may disclose But this *acceptance* should not be interpreted as *approval*, or encouragement of objectively immoral conduct

Here we see that although pastoral counselling is not the same as moral guidance, it is often needed as a prerequisite for the latter. Every pastor or moral guide today should be equipped with the capacity to handle simpler emotional problems. He should also be able to recognize more serious conflicts and disorders and not hesitate to refer them to experts when these are available

The pastor should also be careful not to make moral demands at an inopportune time when psychological preparation is inadequate. This would only lead to excessive guilt feelings, which in turn may cause anguish and despair or lead to rebellion

The reaction to demands imposed from without is generally one of opposition, for conduct then is determined by the moral pressure another individual exerts and not by inner direction or spiritual attraction The fact that the good is identified with certain clear instructions prompts the subject to consider that good conduct resides in material conformity to certain regulations and not in the rightness

of a choice involving his deeper personality and destiny. If the pastor today thinks that he can keep the people in his care straight along the moral path by imposing norms, he may tomorrow find the same people being made to conform to other norms that may be manifestly immoral. Morality can develop only in the atmosphere of freedom and inner conviction.

The pastor must guard against the danger of putting a premium on submissiveness, by showing his satisfaction with those who give external assent to his teaching while being suspicious of those who are inclined to think for themselves. He must learn to trust that the latter can be gradually helped to reflect correctly by themselves. He must help the youth to be honest with themselves so that they may be equipped to face the ever new challenges in their lives.

Guidance on the Rational Level

Law has a place in Christian life as a definite direction safeguarding human values or the common good. But presenting moral life as mere fidelity to a series of laws, some prescribing the accomplishment of precise actions and others forbiding certain actions according to a predetermined model, poses the danger of creating a formalistic mentality.

Hence, since some years, there has been an understandable reaction to legal ethics under the name of 'situation ethics'. Here the stress is on the unique *situation* which calls for a unique response. But situation ethics as such does not provide the key for appreciating the situation.

So, nowadays, the stress is rightly placed on *value*. In fact a law is an expression of a value and a situation must be examined to see the human values implied.

While particular moral norms are the expressions of particular values, these in turn are the specifications of the most basic value of *love* It is in this sense that we can talk of the *primacy of love*. This should not be understood to mean that love is the greatest among moral values or virtues, all being otherwise placed on the same level. This attitude would lead to the neglect of the demands of justice and chastity.

Thus it is most important to realize the true relationship between justice and love. Certain pious people are prone to think that it is enough to concentrate on 'love', to feel love, pity or mercy for the poor, and now and then dole out 'charity' out of supposed generosity. They may not directly steal or injure others But they do not feel any qualms of conscience in supporting unjust social structures, pro-

vided what is called 'law and order' is maintained, even though this may be promoting an order of supreme lawlessness that oppresses the poor. Such a one-sided emphasis on love that is neglectful of justice can lead to a paternalism which degrades the objects of its alleged compassion and implies evasion of one's responsibility. We can easily see the relevance of this matter for the confessional ministry. It is not enough to be preoccupied with individual thefts and the like and for the rest concentrate on the emotion of love. The faithful must be helped to see that true love has to be expressed in an effort to bring about a just social order.

Love is not one among other values, but is that which gives them their full human significance. Love is the 'form' of virtues or the virtue of virtues. Without love there is no real virtue although there may be external conformity to the norms of right action. Hence it is the duty of the pastor to initiate the people to oblative and sacrificial love and to realize it in the concrete demands of life.

One of the notable contributions of recent Moral Theology is the insistence that *all* the values implied in a moral decision should be respected as far as possible. For instance, in dealing with those who are in an irregular marital situation, one must take into account the prophetic function of the Church in upholding the sanctity and indissolubility of the marriage bond, and, at the same time, the call to exercise pastoral solicitude towards those who are in a difficult predicament. The effort to maintain the delicate balance required in harmonizing such apparently conflicting responsibilities must not be shirked.

Here we must briefly touch on the whole question of *moral absolutes*.[16] Traditional morality has taken for granted that there are natural laws which are absolute and immutable, not only regarding the first principles of morality like 'good is to be done', but also concerning specific matters like life and sex. It was said that there are certain types of actions that are 'intrinsically evil' so that their deliberate performance would always entail personal sin.

Of late, an increasing number of moralists are rejecting all externally or juridically defined absolutes and admit only those in the order of love, fidelity and commitment. Killing, extra-marital intercourse and so on would only be 'physical', 'premoral', 'non-moral' or 'ontic' evils or disvalues. These would acquire moral significance only in relation to human intentionality in a given situation. They

16. I have treated this matter exhaustively in *Christian Living According to Vatican II*, Bangalore, Theological Publications in India, second impression, 1982.

could be positively justified when chosen to avoid some more serious evil.

There is evidently a wide gulf between these two positions. The first, which may be characterized as *absolutist*, holds that there are 'intrinsically evil' acts. The second, which can broadly be called *consequentialist*, denies this. Logically, it also denies the distinction between what is directly and indirectly voluntary and considers the prinicple of double effect as redundant.

The absolutist position seeks to safeguard some basic human values. But it fails to realize the complexity of the human condition. Absolutists tend to see only one side of reality. However, real life, especially in today's world, is full of tensions and ambiguities which cannot be simply brushed aside. Today, often the choice is not so much between good and evil as between good and good, or between evil and evil.

The consequentialists, while proposing a more responsible ethic, fail to appreciate the crucial distinction between 'intending' and 'permitting' where evil is concerned. They do not clearly see the difference between 'loss of life' and 'voluntary killing'.

The pastor has to face the fact that moral theologians are generally ranged along these opposite positions. The faithful themselves implicitly often adopt one of them. It may happen that the pastor is inclined one way and the person whom he guides the other way There is no easy way of resolving this difficulty.

First of all, the pastor must respect the mind of the faithful. They are free to adopt any position that is respectable in the Church. The pastor must then enter their field of vision in order to help them to make responsible decisions. We may recall here that the role of the moral guide is not to solve the problems of others but to help others to solve them conscientiously.

The two opposite positions must be rightly understood. Moderate traditionalists assign an important role to the subjective dimension which can diminish or even completely take away the subjective imputability, because of factors such as psychic determinisms. Responsible consequentialists, on the other hand, would require that all the values in a given situation be carefully weighed. They would apply the principle of proportionality with great prudence. Some of them would even admit 'practical absolutes' in matters like adultery and torture.

Personally, I think that there is a middle path which would be more helpful in making personal decisions as well as in moral guidance.

This would admit the validity of some moral absolutes where there is a question of basic human values. In other words, some patterns of action would always involve some moral evil. However, when one is faced with a situation in which he sees moral evil in either alternative, he would have to choose the lesser one. Even older manualists used to say that, when one is in a state of 'perplexed conscience' and the perplexity cannot be resolved even after due reflection and consultation, one would not commit a sin if one chose what appeared to be the lesser evil.

These older authors used to add that such conflict situations are only apparent and only on the subjective level. They were also prone to think that they were rare events and merely arising from error or a scrupulous conscience. This is not surprising, given the self-assurance with which those authors used to handle moral questions. But now it has become clear that moral conflicts in today's complex world are very real and quite frequent. It is not only timidity or scrupulosity that causes them, but the real tensions of life. But the principle of 'choosing the lesser evil' in conflict situations stands. Till now it was consigned to a footnote and hence often ignored. Now it needs to be highlighted.

In recent years the principle has been revived by some European episcopates on the occasion of the controversy following upon *Humanae Vitae* The episcopal conferences have no hesitation in admitting the basic teaching of the papal encyclical that contraception is always a disorder and cannot be 'positively justified' by any reason However, while couples are obliged to respect the openness to life of every conjugal act, they may also judge in conscience that they have to express their love through the marital act and may be unable to rely on the so-called natural methods. In such a perplexity they may feel they have to choose contraception as the lesser evil.

Incidentally, this is the only way in which the teaching of *Humanae Vitae* could be harmonized with the realities of conjugal life in many cases. One could, of course, dissent from the teaching, insisting that it is not infallible. One could also shut one's eyes to the real problem of countless couples. But, if both the values of openness to procreation in every marital act and the personal values of the couples are to be pursued, people will face situations in which the perplexity can only be resolved by choosing the lesser evil. Putting the matter more positively, one may be confronted with a conflict of duties in which one has to choose that which appears, after due reflection, as the more urgent duty.

In such matters, the pastor's role is not to 'permit' or 'forbid', but to help the persons concerned to reflect on all the human values involved and choose those which appear as more urgent. We have to go beyond the habit of asking: "Is it allowed ?" There is no neat 'yes' or 'no' in many matters. If one persists in asking that question one will be caught up in a hopeless dilemma and will get conflicting opinions from others that will only make matters worse.

Here we may speak about the *'law of growth'* or the inability of realizing all the values involved in a given type of situation all at once. The primary norm of Christian morality is total love of God expressed in love of neighbour. Other universally binding moral imperatives that further specify this love can never adequately express the law of growth of a particular individual. As no one is bound to the impossible, no one can be held personally responsible for not realizing in every moral act all the moral values involved.

The pastor or moral guide should recall all the basic human values If a person cannot observe the moral law literally, he should be helped at least to seek the values involved more and more. He should be urged to strive towards the moral ideal gradually, with many ups and downs. This progressive liberation requires an atmosphere of understanding and love This approach finds a model in the divine pedagogy which gradually educated Israel to the demands of morality. To expect people at once to observe the fine points of the moral law immediately would be unrealistic, or, if achieved in some areas, might only be a material observance externally imposed. It may also be to the detriment of other more important values.

Guidance on Religious Level

The rational level of morality already takes into account the dynamism of love The Christian revelation brings out more clearly the dialogal and responsive character of morality. The coming of the Son of God in our flesh in order to share our life enables us to appreciate the personal love of the Father calling for a *personal response*.

This relational dimension of Christian morality must not be understood in narrow individualistic terms. The *I-Thou* relationship should be open to the *we* of the whole human family. The *communitarian character* of the Christian vocation in turn reveals its *historical dimension*, by which is meant the possibility and need for growth in moral understanding and responsibility as a cooperative effort.

It is very important to note that the biblical revelation, as a source of morality, is not so much to be viewed as a set of explicit norms in the

Scriptures, but as the framework in which God reveals himself by entering into personal relationship with his people. The moral teaching of Jesus is wholly bound up with the proclamation of the Kingdom and its consequent summons to men. The tension between its partial realization and the expectancy of the final consummation gives rise to moral urgency. The coming of the Kingdom then imposes the fundamental demand for *metanoia* or radical change of heart which inspires the total attitude of man: turning away from sinful ways; and a resolute turning to God and answering his call

The moral task of the pastor, therefore, is first of all to proclaim the realities concerning our life in Christ through the Spirit and to help people to hear and respond to the voice of the Spirit We have to overcome the traditional dichotomy between Dogmatic and Moral Theology, as well as the unfortunate separation between Spiritual Theology, meant for a few elect, and Moral Theology geared to avoiding sin and destined for the ordinary people The universal call to holiness must be taken seriously and at least the simpler aids to spiritual discernment must be taught to everyone

So the primary role of the pastor or the most important element in guiding consciences is spiritual direction. Much traditional wisdom is available in this regard But it needs to be adapted to the condition and mentality of people today

A special problem regarding life in Christ is that of Christian freedom. One characteristic of today is a universal longing for freedom, especially among the young This must be positively evaluated. St Paul is emphatic in declaring that we are called to liberty (Gal 5: 13), and that we are "not under the law but under grace" (Rom 6: 14; cf Gal 5: 18). People should be encouraged to cultivate true Christian freedom. This does not mean licence but being so led by the interior grace of the Spirit that one spontaneously does what is right Freedom *from* inner passions, constraints and inhibitions, as well as from external compulsions, is ordained to freedom *to* dedicate oneself to the service of others True freedom should lead to responsibility.

Conclusion

We have tried to use the insights of current Moral Theology to trace the main lines of moral guidance today A full understanding of these points would imply a thorough study of recent trends in this changing field. The actual ability for moral guidance would require an initiation to pastoral counselling, to moral decision and to spiritual discernment, and also a clear understanding as to how these disciplines are related.

The Church's mission is not only towards individual men — to save souls', as it used to be put — but it is to transform human society as a whole through the saving grace of Christ As the very life and ministry of the Church is largely conditioned by the contemporary situation, she has to analyse this situation with all the available human resources and discern in the light of faith what she ought to do in order to help human society to find its fulfilment in Christ This applies to the moral growth of each individual as well It would be of little use to inculcate ethical values and principles to the youth if the atmosphere in which they have to live and work is corrupting At the same time there is need for enlightened and strongly motivated people to take the lead in initiating change The pastor can belong to this group if he has the requisite vision and the spirit of service

The recognition of the fact that the 'shepherds' cannot be simply and totally distinguished from the 'flock' is of great significance in moral guidance today Within the Church there are not simply 'shepherds' who care for passive 'sheep', rather, all members are called upon to participate jointly in the common salvific activity of the Church, each according to his or her role and charism As for outside her visible boundaries, the Church does not have to confront others as though they were total aliens or opponents, but to discern the workings of God's grace in them and lead them to find fulfilment in Christ Hence the search for ethical values in the world today should be a joint enterprise of all Christians, all believers and indeed of all people of good will

Evangelization and Harijan Awakening

Reflections on Some Recent Events in the Patna Diocese

J. VELAMKUNNEL, S J

THE Patna Diocese can rightly be considered as a field where experimentation is now taking place with regard to Harijan awakening through evangelization — though the term evangelization is to be understood here in its restricted sense of sacramentalization and the establishment of the local Church The diocese covers an area of 178,945 sq km, a population of nearly fifty thousand Catholics, predominantly of the Scheduled Cast (SC), makes up the Church's presence among more than 26 million people The diocese has 40 mission stations, 137 educational institutions and about 40 charitable institutions In this vast operation more than 14 religious congregations are engaged through various types of evangelical works, spread out if not exclusively, at least very largely, among the Harijans The cumulative effect of all these activities, stretching over the last fifty years, is what can be observed in Patna today Through conversions to Christianity and the process of building up faith-communities, the awakening of people has taken place imperceptibly It has been gradually gathering momentum The recent socio-cultural upheavals in Patna mark a decisive phase — though to many it may appear threatening — in the establishment of a true local Church This paper proposes some personal reflections on recent events I am viewing these moments of struggle as an inevitable stage in the growth of the community to maturity

The paper has two parts In the first part we focus our attention on the recent "socio-cultural disturbances" in Patna on the parish and the diocesan levels. The second part consists of an analysis of the causes of these events We try to point out both the positive contribution causes of these events We try to point out both the positive contribution the Church has made to the awakening of the Harijans and certain challenges that present themselves to the Church. The failure to face some of these has partially contributed to the uprisings among Catholics in the last years.

I. *Recent Happenings among Christians*

Let us then look at the "socio-cultural disturbances" which have occured in Patna, on the parish as well as the diocesan levels. Not all the events can be considered as disturbances in the common understanding of the word; some must rather be viewed positively as landmarks in the history of an oppressed people.

A. *Parish Level*

In the recent past in more than a dozen mission stations the Christians have "revolted" against the ecclesiastical authorities. There were labour problems in some of the institutions, supported by outsiders of varying allegiances. It has been reported by parish priests that some of the Catholic boys registered themselves as Hindus for the matric exams. So also one heard of Catholics having registered their names as Hindus in the last census in different parts of the diocese In a number of places the youth have led agitations against the priests, occasionally even in violent forms A one man commission, consisting of a civil servant, was appointed to investigate the threatening situation of the mission stations, and reports were submitted. Another commission is engaged in a study of the protracted student unrest in one of the Catholic hostels

On the parish level, the emergence of an articulate Harijan leadership is noticeable Where confrontation has taken place, it has as a whole been between the hierarchy and the lay people, organized by village leaders or catechists Even though these were dependent on the mission stations, still they asserted themselves against the Church personnel Often enough the movement was not sufficiently organized at the grass root level; hence it fizzled out or obtained only marginal benefits.

A close examination of the demands made shows that the movement was not crippled by religious inhibitions In fact many of the traditional religious values were bypassed in the course of action Respect for and obedience to superiors was not considered an important value when it came to threatening priests and sisters. Christians were not found any more peace-loving in their strategies than other oppressed groups in social revolt. Love for the heavenly realities so frequently mentioned in liturgical prayers, seem to have been a lesser pre-occupation than material gains. Most of the demands made (except perhaps the one for a seminary and the recruitment of vocations from the Harijans), were very much related to earthly life. They were made in favour of the Christian members only and destined to meet

their immediately felt needs, even though universal love is supposed to characterize Christian faith.

B. *Diocesan Level*

On the diocesan level large numbers of Catholics came together on several occasions. Christians took part in two anti-government demonstrations. One was on the occasion of Fr Martinseck's murder; the other, to protest against the Tyagi Bill restricting freedom of religious conversion. On two occasions the Christians of SC origin came in large numbers from the villages to the capital: the Jubilee Celebration of Bishop Augustine Wildermuth, and the consecration of Bishop Benedict Osta. These were moments when the Christians, scattered through the countryside, had an opportunity to experience their group strength Efforts to organize a demonstration, on the diocesan level, to pressurise the authority to re-open a hostel did not materialize. Besides these, less official but well organized events have taken place, v.g., the annual pilgrimage to the shrine of our Lady at Mokamah. Two lay organizations have come into being on the diocesan level: the Catholic Welfare Association and the Patna Dharma Prantiya Catholic Sabha. One is dominated by Catholics of SC origin, while the other is not.

A few salient features of these movements can be pointed out. First of all, not many Harijan leaders emerged from the big four manifestations, contrary to what happened in the parish level agitations. On the whole, priests and sisters and non-Harijan leaders led these events successfully. The participation of the Christians of SC origin in their planning was very limited. The few Harijan leaders who may have played some substantial role were trained by the Church personnel and largely dependent on the mission.

These were basically sectarian demonstrations, in the sense that they were not ideologically broad enough to include non-Christian Harijans. Similar to messianic movements in other social groups, they were organized around religious leaders and had as their goals sectarian interests. But, in as much as the Harijans were brought together around a single cause or a person, the demonstrations helped them to express their group solidarity.

C. *Harijan Awakening and Ecclesiastical Targets*

In the past fifty years of the Church in Patna we have had hardly any instance of Christians of SC origin exerting group pressure on any secular power, such as landlords or government officials. The Harijans have grown in self-awareness, know-how and economic strength

through the services of the Church. And strangely enough it is against the priests that they have manifested their group power for the first time in their history. The priests were the first targets of their protests, partly because the whole structure of the mission stations is centred around them. In the feudal set-up which remains operative in these stations, often enough the priests are seen as masters and the people as their dependents One could even think that in the incidents that took place the Church personnel were not attacked as priests but as financial controllers The people meant to obtain favours from their masters through pressure, as they became aware of their group strength In many places relief work and a number of favours, institutional and otherwise, had been suspended due to various reasons. This led to discontentment The people look at the Church as an organization parallel to the government and destined to meet the needs of the community They have no easy access to BDO/SDO's or similar government officials They are too weak to exert pressure on the government or the landlords, and the system itself is too complex for the poor to get anything done On the contrary, the priests are known to be easily approachable and kind-hearted The people, moreover, are confident that the priests and sisters will not resort to force to crush their movements. This gives them confidence in their demands.

D. *Reactions to Harijan Uprisings*

Various reactions can be noticed among the Church personnel, ranging from paralysing fear and withdrawal to bold initiative towards dialogue and a change of structures On the whole the uprisings were treated as a Christian community affair.

One of the main reactions was a sense of rejection and hurt feelings. We could notice in some a certain anxiety that the fruit of so many years of toil, suffered at the cost of lives, was being lost. In as much as the religious leaders had identified themselves with the establishment of the Church, the fear of seeing their work end in failure and eventually destined to disappear naturally sank them into despair. Persons in authority who had had complete control over the people and the destiny of the community, suddenly found themselves in a situation where they could not even be sure of their own future.

There was also found among others a firm loyalty to the Christian community and a deep understanding for the oppression which the people have undergone for centuries. The unpleasant events were seen as attempts by a people to be themselves. Such sympathetic attitude was symbolized by the unwillingness of authorities to accept

help from caste Hindus to squash the Harijan uprisings. Preserving Church unity was a top priority for these pastors. A compassionate understanding, coupled with bold steps to restructure the set-up of parishes, seems to have given a new direction to the mission stations

We could also notice among some a tendency towards spiritualization, leading to a "martyr's complex". Identifying themselves with the Master who was rejected by his followers, Church leaders found some spiritual solace in the ingratitude of their faithful. This withdrawal into the spiritual realm was no real solution, but it sustained them during the period of crisis The sprout of charismatic retreats that took place could be viewed as part of the process of spiritualization From one angle, this development was a "spiritual domestication" of the movement of the poor, even though, from another angle, it brought much emotional depth to the religious experience and increased the communitarian sense in the parishes. Its positive values notwithstanding the retreat movement tended to blunt the sharpened sense of self-awareness among the people and the urgency for structural changes in the parishes

II. *Harijan Awakening: The Church's Contribution and Failures*

A deeper analysis of the Harijan phenomenon reveals two factors. the Church's positive contribution to people's conscientization and her failure to measure up to the challenges of the times We shall examine more closely these two elements which seem to account for the happenings reported above

A. *The Church's Contribution to Harijan Conscientization*

When we consider the level of development among Catholics of SC origin as compared to others of the same social background, we recognize the unquestionable role the Church has played in their lives We would like to spell out two important areas conscientization and the unification of the people.

1 *Conversion to Christianity: Call to a New Social Identity*

A change of religion can bring about a number of changes in one's personal and collective awareness. In this sense conversion to Christianity offers a new awareness to the Harijans and this new awareness is embodied in a new social identity. The process of conscientization of the poor, brought about through the building up of Christian faith, seems to engender in them an awakening of their inner freedom. Faith as a commitment to Jesus is reflected in faith in oneself, in one's dignity, one's freedom as well as in faith in one's fellow sufferers.

Faith in Jesus is recognized as a call to grow in self-understanding and to assert it.

When faith in a particular god/goddess or a belief system, in which the various aspects of human life were integrated, has been definitively abandoned through allegiance to another God or belief system, it becomes easy to break, at the same time, with the socio-cultural bondages which had been associated with the previous religion. So there takes place an awakening from the Harijan complex of being "untouchable" or religiously impure to a sense of self-worth derived from having equal access to new life in Jesus. This is symbolized by the access offered equally to all to a worshipping community which professes to transcend caste distinctions. The Christians of SC origin seem to become free from the fear of death and of re-birth in the same or a lower caste This is effected through a personalization of faith in Jesus as Eternal Life, Bread of Life, etc The converts acquire more courage to resist the implications of dehumanizing caste rules, because they have broken with the bondage of caste itself. Their new sense of freedom reveals itself in many ways. the education of girls, the right to have a say in the choice of a marriage partner, etc. The new identity can also offer them more interior freedom to profit by medical services The Catholic women of SC origin seem to have a greater sense of dignity than other women of the same social level and educational standard Similarly, Christians seem to enjoy at least a partial freedom from the bondage of ritual purifications regarding places, times and objects Their new self-understanding appears to have given them new freedom, enabling them to travel freely, to build their houses as they wish, and giving them access to certain professions. Before their conversion to Christianity all these elements were conditioned by their former faith and caste identity We could say that their newly-acquired identity is revealed as freedom, dignity and equality. They begin to look at themselves as subjects of rights, while formerly they were only conscious of their obligations. It is true that in many cases the new converts have had only a glimpse of this freedom and rights, and that their new freedom may be only intermittantly and imperfectly realized in concrete life situations. Their present condition, however, must be compared not with the most emancipated sections of Indian society, but with what it would have been, had they not changed their religion.

One can argue that many of the changes mentioned could have been effected merely through a good education. This may be true. But as far as the Christians are concerned, it is their new religious allegiance which has offered them even the freedom and the motivation

to profit by education Because they exercised their freedom in breaking away from their old faith by embracing a new belief system, they have also gained the freedom to operate changes in other areas of life which of themselves are less vital

In their protests against the hierarchy, the Harijans were only exercising their newly found sense of freedom and dignity, in the measure in which they have started experiencing them They voiced their protests against the Church personnel because — rightly or wrongly — they found them as enslaving as the masters they had abandoned The freedom with which they have learned to look critically at their former religion has sharpened their sense of criticism where inner contradictions are found in their new religion They have become more sensitive to human dignity and freedom The phenomenon is similar to the reaction of an adolescent using his newly discovered freedom against his parents Enlightened parents would rejoice at the growth of the child unto adolescence and help him to adjust to his new condition in life and thus to reach adulthood The local Church too must become an adult Church by passing through a process of maturation, not without upheavals in the community Over-paternalistic leaders may, perhaps, feel threatened But, in fact, they too are part of the local Church and must grow into a new awareness of freedom by learning to accept the people and to grow with them

2. *Conversion to Christianity Call to Unification of People*

On the plane of social functions the Church, like any other organization, is a structured medium It stands in a relationship of dependence towards other variables of the social order and reflects their characteristics It also sacralises the human activities of a culture by putting them into direct contact with the supernatural There exist religious mechanisms to achieve this Let us look at two of those religio-social mechanisms the belief system, and the symbolic system, employed by the Church in awakening a sense of unity among the Harijans

Belief System: The Church, by communicating one uncompromising belief system to the people, instils into them a sense of unity A common commitment to one God, the adherence to a common doctrine and to a common set of Sacred Scriptures, different from those of their former religion, build up a bond of solidarity. The Church teaches the value of love and unity. Catechesis, sermons, retreats, especially charismatic retreats with their emphasis on the affective dimension of faith, liturgical services, etc.— all continually uphold before the people the values of a communitarian life.

Symbolic System: Through a highly complex symbolic system, the Church introduces people to an organization, to a community of believers. The process of sacramentalization and unification of people begins with baptism. The acceptance of the one faith leads to membership in the social entity called the visible Church. Christian fellowship is celebrated symbolically in the Eucharist. Group identity is maintained through the sacrament of confirmation and through marriage between partners of the same faith. If the bond of unity is broken, recourse is had to remedial actions such as confession or reconciliation services. Even the funeral rites and distinct burial grounds confirm the group identity.

Group celebrations reinforce the belief system and deepen the bond of unity. Liturgical services like Sunday Mass, processions, pilgrimages, devotions, etc., are all getherings of people for strengthening their common bond and loyalty. Lay organizations, like Khrus Vir, Parish Councils, CLC, Maria Sangh, etc., are also powerful means for building up group identity. The overall stress on religious leaders in Christianity, the authority of Pope and Bishop, solidify group feeling. The Christian educational system too is a very effective means of conscientization and helps to build up the self-identity of the Christian community.

B. *The Church's Inadequate Response and the Harijan Uprisings*

The positive elements notwithstanding, the analysis of the crisis in the mission stations reveals the deficiency in the relationship between religious leaders and the laity The dissatisfaction seems to be centred around two issues: the economic structures of the Church, and the cultural alienation of Church leaders. The educated youth seem to reject the ideology that supports both

1. *Feudal System and Economic Structures*

In the long history of the Church various socio-political systems have carried the message of Jesus with varying success. One such system was feudalism which emerged after the death of King Charlemagne in 814 and lasted till the end of the Middle Ages One of the basic causes of the present unrest in our mission stations seems to be the inability of the socio-economic system, akin to feudalism, to embody the Gospel message for the oppressed people. The village poor are still suffering under the weight of the zamindari system which represents the Indian version of European feudalism. In concrete life, in many of the mission stations Church leaders adopt feudal attitudes towards the people. The concepts of love, equality, freedom, human

rights, etc., have evolved in modern times. Accordingly, the social system current in the Church should translate these values convincingly to the people. Enlightened through secular education and religious instruction, the people do perceive the distance that separates the message they have been taught and the values embodied in the lives of their leaders. They perceive the inadequacy of the present system to embody the Gospel values which they have embraced. Harijans are an exploited minority and they looked up to Christianity for a new spiritual identity But now they fail to recognize this in the socio-economic system offered to them, which fails to mediate the spiritual reality in concrete life. The charity characteristic of Christian faith calls for justice, equality, respect for human dignity; without these it lacks verification, both on the individual and the structural level of the life of the Church

Church Personnel and the Catechists

Let us take the example of the catechists. On the theoretical plane they are sharing with the hierarchy in the one mission of the Church and are partners in the common mission of Jesus But there can be no authentic partnership if there is inequality in relationships. As long as the catechists are treated as paid employees, even if a little more respectable than others, they cannot be expected to behave differently. Their lived experience of their role defines their self-identity. Often enough they function in the mission stations as teachers, contact persons between low-grade civil servants and the priests, supervisors of works in the compound, buyers, etc. In some cases, their specifically religious task is lost among the many works put on their shoulders So little time and money is spent on their formation and on-going formation. If the contact of priests with the catechists centres mostly on business matters, they are likely to assume that their relationship with the Church is merely a matter of employment and salary.

Where a feudal mentality prevails, philanthropy can exist as an expression of love, but there is no room for true partnership in a common struggle. The lord has rights; the dependents have only duties. The master owes them no apology for the demands he makes on them, no great consideration for their feelings; he will simply be kind to them if he himself is a good master In other words, the relationship is not one of mutual dependence on equal terms, such as an apostolic partnership based on the fellowship in the work of Jesus would require. Many of our Church personnel are given the opportunity of widening the field of their experiences through visits and

journeys, not to speak of legitimate rest. Would not the catechists contribute much more to the people if the field of their experience were widened by visits to other Christian communities outside Bihar? How many of them and of other village leaders accompany priests and sisters on such visits? There have been cases, but too few, each time they have resulted in greater collaboration. Some years ago two groups of catechists from North India, organized by NAC, were taken for an exposure to Churches in the South and the West Could not similar educative visits be arranged for our catechists more frequently? And what about the disproportion between the money spent on the ongoing formation of priests and sisters and of the catechists? Perhaps our catechists could profit much more from the two catechetical centres located in this region Would it not be true to say that better trained catechists could contribute more to the local Church than do priests hailing from another culture?

Church Institutions and Domestic Servants

Feudal attitudes can reveal themselves in our dealings with domestic servants and workers The attitude of high caste landlords towards their workers cannot serve as a model for us, for our institutions too are meant to be a means of evangelization They must offer to those who come into contact with us an environment for growing in self-respect and human dignity Here too philanthropy will not do, a more difficult way of showing love consists in helping the dehumanized persons to get glimpses into inner freedom and self-growth.

Labour contracts, mutually agreed upon, give workers a sense of security and respect An employee may be receiving from the institution in which he works, free medical aid, bricks to build his house, assistance for the education of his children, free clothes, etc, but have only a small salary put down for him on official records In such a case he may, in fact, be gaining more than he wouldget outside, but have no written agreement for his service conditions, no guarantee for his future, except the good will of his employer, no participation in decisions affecting his future, no clear code of conduct, no knowledge of the limits in the demands his employer can make on him. Such a person is basically insecure and will constantly feel the need of pleasing his employer lest favours be withdrawn from him The employer has unlimited economic control over his dependent and thus deprives him of his dignity. The subtle fear of losing this control can motivate employers to maintain the status quo in their relationship with workers. Having in view the self-respect of the workers,

and perhaps also the security of the employers themselves, other procedures should be sought.

Part of the reason why workers in Catholic institutions are dissatisfied is their feeling of dependence and of not growing in life through their own achievements. Human labour in the service of the mission does not seem to be valued as growth of the person; and, not surprisingly, depersonalization can lead to dissatisfaction and eventually to revolt. Yet, Church institutions should not be looked upon merely as administrative centres, for the Church is primarily an instrument of evangelization. Domestic servants and other workers are the first to come into contact with Church institutions; these then must reflect for them the values of the One who sends the Church on her mission.

The Laity and the Financial Resources of the Church

Sharing financial resources seems to be a more crucial issue than the two mentioned above. Dialogue between pastors and the laity often enough breaks down when problems related to Church finances are treated. In many places the setting up or functioning of Parish Councils seems to be hampered due to lack of mutual understanding on economic matters in their relation to the nature of the Church. Thus a proper understanding of, and attitude towards the matter of finances seems to be vital. Church leaders have come to recognize that some of the former ways of helping the poor resulted in making the recipients too dependent on the mission. From an educational point of view they had great limitations. This is not to say that they did not translate love into action, as the laity themselves often recognized. In fact, in the context of our search for new social structures destined to help the poor, neither withdrawal of help nor continuation of the former policy is commendable. A new approach is required. It is important to realize that resources belong to the Church as a whole, not to the hierarchy alone. The poor know by now that funds are raised in foreign countries in their name. If money is collected in their name, they have a right to it. The Church personnel are custodians and not owners of the resources of the Church, and hence cannot simply dispose of them as they wish. If the Catholic community, i e, the laity and the hierarchy together, own the money, every section is entitled to a say in the policy making for its expenditure. It is true that the leaders have an educational role to play in this process, but they have no absolute possession of the resources. In the process of discernment by which the community seeks the most appropriate way of spending donations from sister-Churches abroad, their role is through their decision to put a seal to the common discernment, thereby

authenticating it. But this is not due to a right of ownership on the part of the leaders but derives from the sacramental nature of the community.

Various kinds of funds must be distinguished and the intention of the donors respected. But the beneficiaries are never simply individuals, but persons working in the missions; the funds are offered as a response to the situation as it exists in the third world. This cannot be overlooked in the way of spending them While the intention of the donor must be respected in all sincerity, still large expenditure towards structures with little apostolic effectiveness or that are culturally incongruous cannot be justified. In general the local people are in a better position to discern what is in harmony with the environment and the indigenous cultural patterns. The financial administration of the mission stations must reflect a relationship of partnership between lay collaborators and the Church personnel

Buildings and the institutional set-up of the mission stations are in theory for the benefit of the total community. But often their actual mode of operation is so ambivalent that they become an obstacle to mutual cooperation Sometimes the dissatisfaction among the laity is due to the fact that the immediately tangible benefit of the means of the apostolate goes largely to the Church personnel, as in the case of buildings or vehicles The laity are puzzled by the subtle distinction which is implicitly made between the ownership of a means of apostolate and its use.

Starting from the clear stand that the financial resources of a diocese or parish belong to the Church as a whole, and not exclusively to the hierarchy, we could devise new ways of involving the laity in the running of the mission From this common understanding new economic structures could be devised through which the lay people will have an effective say One way of seriously involving them would consist in making the pastors accountable to the parish, and not merely to the Bishop This would remove many misunderstandings on the part of the laity and would help the priests to be more moderate The pastors will have the freedom to spend their salary as they please, but will be responsible to the people for the common funds. The laity might suggest providing adequate drinking water for the people as a priority before buying refrigerators for the priests and sisters If the Parish Council were to be truly involved in the decision making process, the people might not so easily accept as a top priority two storey buildings for the Church leaders, while their own roofs are leaking and their children emaciated ! If the people were, moreover, urged to collect funds — in the measure in which this is possible today — and

to allot them, different sets of priorities surely would emerge. The gap between the life-style of, and the allotment of money for priests and sisters on the one hand, and the catechists on the other, would be reduced. And surely people would take greater pride in their Church and its leaders. People grow in responsibility by exercising their freedom in responsible activities. Admittedly, the pastors as well as the people will have to undergo painful experiences in the educational process of evolving participatory Church structures But their common effort will result in a new understanding of the Church and give shape to a genuine local Church. Both lay people and Church leaders will grow together in mutual accountability. In fact, the recent diocesan pastoral meetings between lay leaders, priests, sisters and the Bishop are a step which may take us a long way in this new direction

Cultural Distance between Religious Leaders and Laity

An area where the hierarchy has not adequately met the challenges of the times is cultural identification with the laity. The cultural distance between leaders and people is a serious cause for dissatisfaction Cultural closeness is called for, not so much as a strategy for increasing the number of converts, but rather to reveal the true face of Jesus in his Incarnation through the presence of a Church truly incarnate among the people. This process of inculturation is an absolute requirement for the mission, but it also meets in practice with limitations arising among the missionaries from conditions of health, natural endowments and the disparity of culture at birth Their educational and cultural background cannot simply be cancelled out. People seem to recognize this point There are, however, so many areas of life where the distance can be reduced The laity surely could be made to feel more comfortable in the set up of the mission stations In this regard the difference in the access people have to the various areas of the mission compound seems quite symbolic. There is a courtyard or the open verandah where the ordinary people are received, the adjacent room or closed verandah where the catechists and the village leaders are welcomed; and the inner room and dining room where the sisters, fellow priests and the city elite are entertained This may seem a caricature, but in many cases the reality comes close to it.

So few of us priests think of apologising to a catechist or a Christian of SC origin when we interrupt our conversation with them to entertain a sister or an official, in English or in a language unknown to the local people, while in the reversed situation a word of apology comes to us naturally. In common meetings of laity, priests and

sisters, are we showing due sensitivity to the feelings of the local people, when secret messages or jokes are exchanged between us and the sisters in a language unknown to the laity ? Often enough, at public gatherings like processions and feasts, we find priests and sisters grouping together and conversing in English or in a language unknown to the local people. To say nothing of commensality, do the catechists and laity feel at home when invited for a common celebration ? A higher official from the South, working in Bihar, is likely to have condescending attitudes towards his subordinates in the office. But does it befit a missionary who has come to share the life of the people to adopt similar attitudes and give expression to them in conversation ? There are so many areas of life where a greater closeness to the laity could be fostered. We need a deeper sharing in the areas of fear and love, where religious experience and human relationships seem to merge and coalesce to make human life whole and entire. Only then shall we be able to speak of a true solidarity with the people

Conclusion

We began by exploring some of the major happenings in the Patna diocese in the past few years. Then we proceeded to an analysis of the causes behind the Harijan agitation in the mission stations. We pointed to some aspects where the Church has made a positive contribution to the growth of the people in self-awareness The failure of the Church personnel to create appropriate social and economic structures as well as their cultural distance from the laity finally appeared to us responsible to no small extent for the Harijan uprisings. The emergence of a lay leadership and the people's self-awareness is the natural outcome of what has been taking place in the diocese for many years. We must look at this process of growth as the maturing of Christian faith and the taking root of a true local Church; we must also view them as resulting from the dynamics of social change for which the seeds have been planted by the missionaries. The events we are witnessing today are the inevitable birth-pangs in the process of emancipation of the Harijans. Instead of looking at the emergence of a lay leadership with suspicion, as a threat to the hierarchy, the religious leaders should take legitimate pride in the people's growth. Just as there can be excesses in the leaders' exercise of their authority, so too mistakes are possible on the part of the laity Can anyone grow without making mistakes ? This is the risk involved in allowing people to be themselves and to reach maturity in the local Church.

Reconciliation

The Bearing of Paul on the Synodal Theme

G Pattery

INDEPENDENCE has become a concept for us in our country, to be celebrated ritually once a year at the Red Fort, and then to be forgotten for the rest of the year. Its relevance, either as a reality that we relish or a goal that we cherish, has disappeared from our economic, political and social thinking As Ved Metha put it· "An hour away was independence for the country, but it seemed a hollow celebration"[1] One is tempted to draw a certain parallel between our yearly national celebration of independence and the ecclesial ritual of Synods. Synods with their mode of functioning, discussions and deliberations, do not have much impact on the Christian communities, because they do not emerge from the grass root level, nor do they reflect any felt need of the Christian communities at large. They are confined to the conceptual needs of the Synodal Fathers, or at the most to what they think is best for the community These drawbacks of the previous Synods, however, do not allow us to write them off as irrelevant, nor do they sanction a certain aloofness on our part towards the efforts made by the Church in our times. Reconciliation and Penance in the Mission of the Church has been chosen as the theme for the forthcoming Synod; it is worth our while to reflect on the implications of this theme for the Church universal and particularly for the Church in India.

I. *The Pauline Understanding of the Ministry of Reconciliation*

The present reflections on "Reconciliation" are restricted to the Pauline understanding, for the simple reason that Paul alone specifically deals with the ministry of reconciliation in the Church while other New Testament writers are comparatively silent on the theme taken in its strict sense. In fact, the term 'reconciliation' proper is found only once in the Synoptics (Mt 5, 25) in the context of getting reconciled with one's brother

1 Ved Metha, *Face to Face, An Autobiography*, Jaico Publishing House, Bombay, 1963, p 129.

The basic text for our consideration will be 2 Cor 5, 18-21, where Paul directly deals with the theme of reconciliation. Three important aspects of reconciliation can be traced in the text, namely: a) God's reconciliatory act in and through Jesus, by which he reconciles us and the world to himself (vv. 18-19); b) Reconciliation as ministry and Gospel entrusted to the Church (vv 18-19), c) An appeal to all to be reconciled to God (v 20)

1. *God's Reconciliatory Act in Jesus*

The Greek word *kattallassō* (meaning to change, to alter, to liberate, to reconcile, etc) stands for God's act by which he reconciles us and the world to himself. The implication is that God does not need to reconcile himself to us because he remains permanently reconciled to us and the world Therefore, on his part, reconciliation bears the mark of an unconditional act, by which he offers himself to us[2] Paul's concern, however, is deeper and more Christological for he says that God's reconciliation is brought about, in and through the death of Jesus· "God was *in Christ* reconciling the world to himself" (v 19), "For our sake he made *him to be sin* .." (v 21), "All this is from God, who *through Christ* reconciled us to himself" (v 18) In Col 1, 20, we read " and *through him to reconcile to himself* all things, whether on earth, or in heaven, making peace by the *blood of his cross*" The Letter to the Romans (5, 10-11) is still more precise "For, if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God *by the death of his Son,* much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life Not only so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now *received our reconciliation*"

By saying that reconciliation is achieved through the death of Jesus, certainly Paul is not referring only to the exact moment of the death of Jesus on the cross From Paul's Christology and from the context of the text in Corinthians, it is clear that the kenosis at the incarnation (Phil 2, 6f), the humiliation, the being sin for us (2 Cor 5, 21), the obedience unto death on the cross — in short the whole kenotic existence of Christ leading to the cross — is responsible for this reconciliation Divine reconciliation is accomplished in and through the kenotic existence of Jesus (and not through a passive act wherein God waits for the sinful man to return and reconcile himself to God). God was seeking us in Jesus, through his kenosis The result of such a reconciliatory act consists in the new creation. Man is renewed in and out He is awakened to love and to the kingdom (2 Cor

2. Cf. KITTEL, *TDNT*, Vol I, pp 251f.

5, 17) It is not the removal of a guilt feeling that matters; rather, newness of life in Jesus is what matters

2 *Reconciliation· the Ministry of the Church*

The apostolic community is entrusted with the ministry and the Gospel of reconciliation (v 18) For Paul the origin of his ministry lies in the very act of divine reconciliation The ministry and the Gospel of reconciliation are constituted by and implied in the act of reconciling Accordingly, the mode and style of the reconciliatory act determine the mode and style of ministry as well The kenotic pattern, therefore, is intrinsic to the ministerial path E Schillebeeckx observes pointedly that "at the beginning of the transitional period from the apostolic Church to the post-apostolic community, the Church's ministry was in no way detached from the community or so to speak set above it; but the ministry is clearly incorporated into the totality of all kinds of services , oriented to build up the body of the Lord (Eph 4, 21f)"[3] This remark is quite relevant in the context of our reflection on the ministry of reconciliation The building up activity primarily consists in a ministry of reconciliation The reconciliatory act primarily constitutes and, therefore, determines the ministry, even though one should add that 'ministry' in turn acts upon reconciliation The kenotic reconciliatory act of Jesus was not an end but a beginning, in the sense that reconciliation remains an ongoing process to be brought about by the Church It is a praxis to be followed by the community of believers, not a ' theory ' formulated by Jesus to be repeated by the Church; not a belief to be recited, but a message to be enacted In its praxis and enactment, the Church has to follow the kenotic path which was intrinsic to the act of reconciliation in Jesus and, therefore, remains determinative until its completion at the end of time.

3 *An Appeal to be Reconciled*

"We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God" (v 20). The Pauline appeal is universal in character and beseeching in its tone, in accordance with the initiatory-kenotic-reconciliatory act of God. In other words, the appeal for reconciliation itself is patterned on the mode of reconciliation, and therefore is forceful and inviting at the same time.

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3 E SCHILLEBEECKX, *Ministry, A Case for Change*, SCM Press, London, 1981, p 8

II. *Theological Implications*

1. *The Church's Mission of Reconciliation to the World*

The kenotic mode of reconciliation, we said, is intrinsic to the very act of reconciling itself. In Jesus' kenotic existence, one may distinguish two moments of self-emptying, as it were. Firstly, Christ "did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself" (Phil 2, 6f) Secondly, Jesus disengaged himself from the rulers and powers of this world and opted for the *anawim* of Yahweh, to set them free (Lk 4, 18f) At both the stages, there is a 'disengagement'— a bracketing out — first, from the equality with God; second, from the power structures of this world What is striking in this disengagement is the fact that it involves a judgment that corrects, or calls for a revision of our understanding of God and man The kenotic existence of Jesus radically questions man's idea of God and of himself God is (and not has) love in praxis In and through his option, Jesus showed what is truly human The paradox of the incarnation is continued throughout the reconciliatory act; reconciliation is still brought about by and still includes judgment.

If the Church wishes to be the sacrament of reconciliation to the world, it is imperative that she follows the same kenotic path, disengaging herself from 'power and glory', and from the socio-economic, political, cultural and religious power structures of this world. Such a disengagement necessarily implies a judgment, bringing to light the injustice and sinfulness of these structures However, kenotic judgment is not merely condemnatory, but salvific; it invites men to the divine praxis of love, reconciling them to the proper understanding of God and man. The sacramental nature of the Church's mission of reconciliation does not mean that she sits in waiting with the 'reservoir of her forgiving graces', to distribute them to sinners if and when they approach her; nor is sacramental reconciliation a distributive justice Rather, the Church should recognize the existence of evil in the world, disengage herself from it, judge it in its sinfulness and thus bring it to the reconciliation of God In other words, the Church must bring about this reconciliation and not simply distribute it in capsule form Today in the Church, however, reconciliation is conceived too exclusively within the framework of the sacraments, and the sacrament of penance is viewed as the only means of reconciliation. More often than not, injustice and oppression and other dehumanizing evils do not fall within the confessional forum. This is an anomalous situation for the Church today. A theologian of Rahner's stature admits the gravity of this situation when he writes:

> It must not be forgotten that a great amount of injustice and lovelessness exists in the world, for which we are responsible, but which does not at all become discernible in the average every day consciousness of man and of society: the exploitation of social power for one's own advantage, the culpable economic advantages which play into the hands of the unjust structures of our society and are all too matter-of-factly and selfishly accepted Such and similar sins against love of neighbour and justice must be pondered and overcome, even though they do not at all occur in the customary confessional manuals (Therefore a penitential devotion) should be an opportunity for each community of Christians to face the injustices within its own group, injustices which the real bourgeois society frequently accepts in a blasé manner and simply as a matter of fact.[4]

The secrecy and privacy of the confessional forum may not be an adequate means for a true kenotic reconciliatory act. Confession tends to become a fruitless and empty ritual which causes no real reconciliation of the evil in the world. How shall we effectively sing the divine reconciliatory song in a strange land of injustice, oppression and hatred ?

2 *The Church: Sacrament of Reconciliation unto Herself*

In Jesus' kenotic existence, one may speak of a *self-reflexive stage* (to use a philosophical category) wherein Jesus strives to empty himself of his own self. As man he had to be fully reconciled to God, to be completely transparent to his Father. His striving to be fully transparent to his Father drew him out of himself, and that brought about the reconciliation between man and God.

The Church too, in order to project the image of a sacrament of reconciliation, should undergo perennial self-reflexive kenosis, so that on her part she may remain reconciled to God, transparent to the risen Lord. Such a reflexive kenosis will draw her out of herself and will lead her to greater self-awareness. In this process of self-awareness, she would find herself as the 'minister' to the Christian community, striving with her members, guiding them and building them up (cf. Eph 4, 2f). Her self-reflexive consciousness might demand that she brackets out the organizational, beaurocratic structures that hinder her, in order that she may be intent on her ministry only. This might lead the Church to a better self-understanding wherein she would learn that God has reconciled "US" to himself, and therefore that the whole Christian community (nay, the whole humanity) is the temple of the Holy Spirit. The Church may then have to be first reconciled within herself. Have the laity yet been given full recognition within her ranks ? And how can the Church claim self-transparency as long as she offers the image of brethren separated from each other ? The Church must

4. K RAHNER, *Penance Today*, Dimension Books, New Jersey, 1974, pp. 34-35

be drawn out of herself in order that the Christic reconciliatory act may become more transparent. Divisions and rivalries within the ecclesial body — between dioceses, between clergy and religious, among the religious congregations themselves, between the different rites, etc. — do not hasten the process of kenosis, but block the reconciliatory thrust. The Church stands in need of reconciliation. The healing touch of Christ should heal her first if she is to carry on the reconciliatory act of Christ through her own kenotic presence. Reconciliation needs to be brought about, not sold out; to be effected, not merely announced.

3. *The Church's Appeal to Reconciliation*

Every man is invited to partake of the richness of the reconciliatory act of Jesus. The Gospel of reconciliation addresses itself to all. The Church in and through her ministry should reach out to all with this Gospel of the newness of life. She cannot and should not remain satisfied with Sunday Christians receiving the sacrament of penance As the eschatological community of God's reconciliation, she should find ways and means for making God's decisive act effective in the world. The sacramental forum of penance should also be adapted to the needs of modern men estranged in the world.

Conclusion

The Pauline understanding of reconciliation has far-reaching implications for the Church. Its radical message should prompt the coming Synod to devise new horizons for the Church's action. Injustice, oppression, all the forms of dehumanization inflicted on the weak and the poor, should fall within the scope of this reconciliation. Only then will the Synodal reflections make an impact on the Christian community; only then will the sacrament of penance cease to be an easy remedy, a convenient escape for an elitist minority. As Helder Camara put it

> There are those whose being is possession,
> There are those whose essence is giving [5]

The Church has no other option but to belong to the latter.

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5. Helder CAMARA, *The Desert is Fertile*, Sheed and Ward, London, 1974, p 26

Notes

For a Theology of Literacy

Some years ago I wrote some thoughts on the theology of education, based on a reflection on the nature of the human person.[1] Born as an incomplete being, man, I remarked, is called to pass from *prakṛti* (nature) to *saṁskṛti* (perfected being), this process of *becoming* human overlaps in him with his growth as a child of God. I believe this to be a valid and fruitful approach to a theology of education; more fruitful indeed than any apology or legitimizing efforts for Catholic schools. Much as the political-religious issue may be worth studying, it should not be confused, and certainly not identified, with the search for the meaning of education seen from the perspective of Christian faith.

I would like here to explore another aspect of the theology of education. It refers specifically to literacy, i.e., to the ability to read (and write) which forms one aspect, not the *only* content, of education. One could think at first that literacy is but one among other skills imparted through education, one among many possible channels of education. Consequently, one could also think of it as optional, not as a necessary or normative step in the process of human growth. Artistic skills, technical know-how, agricultural expertise, competence with the image media, etc, could be thought as other alternative forms. And, if the prophet Mc Luhan is correct, the image revolution is in fact destined to take over from the literary revolution, with the implication that education to literacy will become less and less important. Literacy then would have been considered a useful skill, at least in our century, but would not impose itself as a necessary component of education.

Is this analysis correct ? Does it sufficiently take into consideration the actual function of literacy in human growth ? The problem could be studied from a sociological and psychological perspective; one could perhaps establish through research the close relation of literacy to the process of becoming man; and this could provide a basis to affirm that it is an important step in the process of God's revelation to man, on the principle that "man alive is the glory of God". The growth in self-awareness and freedom that derives from literacy can suggest that literacy is at least a privileged skill, and in our culture a necessary one, in the process of human growth.[2]

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1. Cf. VIDYAJYOTI 43 (1979), pp. 346-359.
2. This is the approach in the interesting article by M. KALATHIL, "The Ministry of Universal Literacy", in *Indian Missiological Review* 2 (1980), pp. 36-40.

Is Literacy Required by the Bible ?

But I submit that there is in Revelation, as it has reached us, an important element that allows us positively to affirm the need of literacy for human growth in God's Kingdom. This I derive from the place and the function of Sacred Scripture in the history of Revelation. We certainly should not make the written word the *analogatum princeps* of revelation. Revelation is fundamentally God's self-communication to humanity in its historical progress, a communication that takes place essentially through the deeds and words of God and in the person of Jesus Christ (*DV*, 2). The words to which the Vatican II text alludes are primarily the prophetic words, spoken rather than written. The written account of revelation, which contains the official record of the faith experience of Israel and of the early Christian community, is revelation in a *derivative* sense. Even so, however, it is an integral element in the revelatory process as it has actually taken place in the history of salvation. Although appearing relatively late and dependently on the historical event and the prophetic word, the written account is included in God's revelation as it was experienced by Christ himself and by the Church: "It is written ..". We legitimately call the Bible "the Word of God", even while we profess that the Word was made flesh.

It is significant that the theological tradition has placed the "closing of Revelation" not at the resurrection of Jesus but at the end of the apostolic era, thus making it coincide with the completion of the Biblical record Admittedly, that Revelation "is closed" can easily lend itself to wrong interpretations as if God had ceased to speak and reveal himself soon after the first century A.D.! This is obviously not the meaning of the saying. It only tells us that there exists a climax, an eschatological moment in the self-manifestation of God, when his innermost reality as loving Father and his plan of salvation is revealed "now" (Rom 16, 26), "in these last days" (Heb 1, 2), when the "mystery of Christ", hidden from all ages, has been manifested. And, although the Biblical expressions identify this climax with the Christ event, specially his death and resurrection, yet in a true sense that climax is "completed", perfected, "closed", with the writing down of the apostolic witness in the inspired text, at the end of the apostolic era.

This means that God's revelation, in its complete sense, reaches us partly through the written Word of Scripture. It also means that the human race to which God's word is addressed, needs to be literate, to be able first to write down and then to read the text given to it by the working of the divine Spirit. Without literacy the community of believers would not be able to know, and to respond to, God's call to humankind. Of course, this does not mean that only literates can be good Christians — many saints have responded to God's Word who never read the Bible but only listened to it in the preaching of the community. It is not even sure that all the apostles were literate! But the Bible as actual reality in the mystery of the Church does imply that the community needs literacy in its midst. Without it, revelation *as we know it* would not exist. As a constitutive element of the Church, the Bible is thus a kind of sacramental mediation of God's revelation.

Vatican II goes to the extent of saying that the Sacred Scriptures are venerated in the Church "like the very Body of the Lord", i.e., like the Eucharist; and it affirms that in the scriptures also the Church receives "the bread of life" (*DV*, 21).

The Second Letter to Timothy spells out the function of the "sacred writings" (*hiera grammata*)· in a very strong statement the author says that they are able, surely by a divine power (*dynamena*), to instruct, or educate, or make wise (*sophisai*), that is to say, to impart formation in view of salvation (*eis sōterian*). Surely, they do not do so automatically, by way of incantation or sorcery, but "through faith in Jesus Christ", i e , through a faith which places us in the reality of the Lord (2 Tim 3, 15) The reading of Holy Scripture is thus a priviledged moment in the history of our salvation, *if* it is shot through, "informed" with, a true faith relationship to God Although in a subordinate manner, reading the Scriptures does contribute to the salvation of believers.

That the Christian Scriptures are a constitutive element of the Church, and therefore of the special revelation of God in Jesus Christ, implies as *a priori* conditions on the part of humanity not only openness to the God who reveals himself but actual literacy, the ability to *read* And even if, absolutely speaking, not all need this skill in so far as the Scriptures are read in community, surely the fulness of Christian life would call in every believer for the ability to have personal access to the written Word of God, over and above communal sharing of that Word For the community is enriched by each member, in such a way that community and individual members interact in a mature way To *be* a Christian and to *witness* to the Christian reality holds in itself a demand for literacy, as part of the Christian vocation as such (apart from other reasons that may call for it) Perhaps this relation of Christian life to literacy via the reality of the Bible is the unconscious reason why the Church has always promoted education, in various ways but in all ages. It is certainly the main impulse that has led the Protestant Churches to insist on promoting Biblical literature Even if within the Catholic perspective the emphasis is different, still the connection is not lost Tillich is justified in speaking in Christianity of the "sacrament of the written word"

Bible and Sacraments

But there is a difference. Where the other sacraments or "saṁskāras" are concerned, the natural capacity for receiving them is given with man's "raw" nature, his inborn *prakṛti*: ability to eat, to marry, to be healed, even gifts of leadership, etc. Of course, this *a priori* or inborn ability must be accompanied by a faith attitude in order that one may enter into a sacrament, a *saṁskāra* But no other "perfection of nature" ("saṁskāra" in its original meaning) is required. On the contrary, the "Sacrament of God's Word" cannot be actualised except through that "saṁskāra"[3] of the human being, that perfection or

3 This paragraph uses some of the many nuances of the word *samskāra* in Indian culture It literally means "putting together", "making perfect" (*sam*+*kāra*, from the root *kr*), it comes then to mean embellishment, *perfection*, and also

accomplishment that we call literacy. In this context education becomes part and parcel of the (quasi-) sacramental sign which is the Bible. We could perhaps say that, just as the charism of Biblical inspiration rests not only on the last authors who compiled the various Biblical accounts but also, in some way, on the earlier generations that through progressive formulations created the more ancient literary units, so also the activity of the same Spirit extends forward to the preparation, through literacy, of the peoples and communities that are called to read the word of God There is a close correlation between the *theopneusis*[4] of the Bible and the *saṁskāra* of literacy. To teach reading is an activity that prepares for and makes effective God's own revelatory action in so far as it has become — secondarily — written text. To teach is "*sacramental*".

Literacy, therefore, stands on a different level than other forms of education, like teaching sports or other skills These may be desirable forms of human growth, but are not directly linked with the complete experience of God's historical revelation given to us in Jesus Christ who reaches us (partly) in the inspired text Why God decided to include the cultural phenomenon of writing within his economy of revelation cannot be decided *a priori*, though one may find arguments to show that it was befitting But we know that, as actually given to us, the economy of salvation reaches us, in its climactic event, in a literary culture And, though literacy is a comparatively late phenomenon in the history of humanity, we can say that revelation, *as God has actually given it to us*, could not have taken place indifferently at any time and in any place in human history. It required a 'fulness of time', not only in the spiritual but also in the cultural sense. This is why we can affirm, I believe, that the spread of literacy belongs essentially to the growth of the "mystery of Christ".

Other Religions

What has been said about the Bible in the Christian economy applies also, *mutatis mutandis*, to most world religions. The phenomenon of Sacred Scriptures as a common element of many religious traditions requires perhaps closer sociological analysis than it has received so far It is true that the function of the Book is different in different religions: the Qur'anology of Islam that has led to such extraordinary products of calligraphy, not to speak of other cultural phenomena, has no real parallel in the Hindu tradition. Here the function of the Śruti is different, less independent of the living Guru and more subordinate to the religious experience But, in spite of clear differences, the sacred text and even the *written* sacred text has in most religions a distinctive value It expresses, within a religion and culture, the *definitiveness* of what has been given to the community in the foundational event, and becomes the *norm* that will guide and

education, training of the mind Finally it means the sanctifying ceremonies (*sacraments*) spread over a person's life What is affirmed here is simply that, while the seven saṁskāras of the Church do not require a prior *saṁskāra* at the level of culture, the Bible as "sacrament of God's Word" cannot be operative without the *saṁskāra* of education being present.

4 Cf 2 Tim 2, 16.

somehow judge the life of the community. The written word also becomes the *guarantee* of the unity of the community against the threats posed by geographical and temporal distances Through his reading of "the Word of God" the present day Christian knows himself to be in communion with the Apostolic Church, and the Esquimau Christian knows that he shares the same faith as the Tamil believer. In fact the Bible is the strongest bond of union and point of reference for the W C C. and for all ecumenical activity The reading of the Bible thus becomes constitutive of the Christian, not only in relation to God's revelation but also where his awareness of belonging to a communion is concerned To teach literacy is, therefore, to lay a necessary condition for the existence of believing communities — Christian or otherwise — in the measure of the importance which each tradition attributes to the Sacred Text

Some Possible Misunderstandings .

What has been said above should not be interpreted as implying that teaching people to read has meaning and value *only* in the measure in which it makes the Sacred Writings accessible to them There exists a more basic aspect in the teaching vocation which we have treated elsewhere, and there are other aspects too in the question of literacy [5] We only say that a full theological understanding of education should *also* take into consideration the direct relationship of education to the possibility of access to the Sacred Scriptures, especially, in our context, to the Bible which we believe to be a subordinate but integral element of Christian Revelation

Nor do we say that the mere ability to read is sufficient to allow the Bible, or other Scriptures for that matter, to fulfil their function in God's plan Reading would be of little use without interpretation, therefore, it implies more than literacy. Pursuing this, we would probably enter into the question of Tradition, as well as into other problems connected with Hermeneutics. This also would point towards a much wider function of education besides the teaching of the r's. Perhaps many elements in our educational curricula, like history, social analysis, psychological self-understanding, etc , could be related to this wider question

It could be objected that the argument presented here, if it proves anything, proves too much For, in so far as the Bible is actually written in Hebrew and Greek, the argument could be pressed to say that Christian education, at least ideally, should include the teaching of the Biblical languages. Would then this not make Christianity an extension of the Graeco-Semitic world ? I think that in a Christian perspective this argument does not hold. Much as the original text is important in the process of preserving and translating the written Word of God, the stress in Christian history and theology has always been on the *message*, not on the *language*. Unlike Muslims who stress the identification of the Word of God with its original linguistic expression, Christians have from the earliest times felt quite comfortable

5 See references in notes 1 and 2 above.

with translations. During the Biblical times themselves, the LXX translation of the Old Testament has in a sense been "canonised" by the New. Neither in the liturgy nor in the day to day life of the communities have the original languages ever been insisted upon. Their knowledge is certainly required for the specialists who are called upon to translate the written Word of God in ever fresh idioms. But the Word is available *as inspired text* through translations: "This is the Word of God" This attitude precludes the danger of a magic approach to the sacred text: it is not the sounds that matter, but the meaning of the message *Artha*, rather than *śabda*, is the centre of the Christian Scriptures[6] "In the beginning was Meaning..."; and this Meaning-and-Purpose of God was 'enfleshed', and later made accessible to us (partly) through Sacred Writing. It is the supreme merit of literacy that it allows us to enter into the mystery of divine condescension, by enabling us to reach the Meaning (*artha*) conveyed in the Sacred Text (*śabda*).

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S J

The "Ashram Movement" and Social Justice

This is, I am afraid, a rather belated comment on the Statement of the last EATWOT Conference, reprinted in the February 1982 issue of VIDYAJYOTI My response concerns paragraph three of section 58 of the Statement (p 92) which I quote in full:

> The ashramic movement of the 1960s was a reaction to the "development theology" of the West Both recognized the poverty of Asia Development theology saw the cause as lack of economic growth, the ashramic movement discerned the enemy as greed. The movement was unable however to move from the micro-ethical level to the macro-structural, because it failed to see the structural greed of systems and institutions Lacking the full perspective, the people of the ashramic movement remained in passive solidarity with Asia's poor and oppressed without actually participating in their struggle.

It is perhaps worth noting that paragraph 56 and 57 of the EATWOT document seem to support the view that the ashrams have been and are making a significant contribution to the growth of a more just society. For paragraph 56 affirms: "Voluntary poverty, so central to Asian religious ideals, and the simplicity of life-style it implies, are powerful antidotes to capitalist consumerism and to the worship of mammon." And paragraph 57 in turn remarks: For Christian life and theology to become relevant for us in the Third World,

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6 In Sanskrit culture *śabda* and *artha*, "word and meaning", form a dyad in dialectic complementarity, denoting the external and the internal dimensions of speech Like Śiva and Pārvatī the two are inseparable (cf Kālidāsa, *Raghuvamśa* 1, 1). The word *logos* is often translated in India by *śabda* — rightly under many aspects But this translation should not make us forget other connotations of the word *logos* unlike perhaps *lalia* or *rhēma*, it does not denote only, nor even primarily, the external word but the word as *meaning*, the inner dimension of speech We could perhaps also translate it rightly as *artha* It is the *artha* or meaning (and "purpose") of Scripture, rather than its linguistic form, that is the carrier of God's Revelation.

the Gospel of Jesus should be able to meet our peoples in and through our cultures. To make this possible, the core of the Gospel must be disengaged from its Western wrappings and re-expressed in the cultural idiom of the poor and oppressed of our continents." It is largely in the Christian ashrams that this work has already been initiated in India, though it is true that those of us in ashrams need to be alert to the danger of developing ways of worship and spirituality that may be deeply rooted in the brahminical traditions of the past, but for that very reason are alien to "the poor and oppressed". We need to be in close and living contact with the popular currents of thought and religion without relinquishing all that is good and of permanent value in ancient traditions whose only blemish may often have been that they were made the exclusive prerogative of a privileged minority. Here the Gospel message is surely that "all truth comes from the Holy Spirit" and is the birthright of every man, woman and child . . .

There are a number of points in the document which seem to me to call for comment in the interest of factual accuracy and a proper understanding of the "Ashram Movement", and perhaps even of a more effective "struggle for justice" !

1. I am not quite sure what is referred to by the phrase "*ashram movement* of the 60s". The term "movement" suggests a rather widespread trend, whereas there was so far as I know no very strong tendency to begin ashrams in the sixties: if the reference is to the *demand* for ashrams which surfaced during the All India Seminar of 1969 and the preparatory meetings for it held throughout the country in the year or two before that date, "movement" hardly seems the right word. There were of course already a number of Christian ashrams well before the sixties, but the mere fact of their existence can hardly be described as a "movement".

2. The demand for ashrams referred to above arose not from any reaction against Western theology, developmental or otherwise, but from the strongly and almost universally felt need within the Church for deeper and more living prayer. Again and again it was said in the preparatory seminars that the participants did not want to know *about* God and his Christ, they wanted to *know* God The phrase "experience of God", used in the first draft of the handbook for the Spirituality Workshop, caught on like wildfire: it was repeated again and again from groups all over India, coupled with urgent requests for men and women who could help others in this line to be set apart for this work. It was *in this context* that the demand for ashrams came in, as the natural setting for such persons and for initiation into a deeper, more contemplative, more experiential prayer. It is true that the constantly reiterated demand for a simpler, poorer and more indigenous life-style for clergy, religious and Christians in general also contributed to the development of the ashram idea. But the root inspiration sprang from the general realization of the lack of contemplative depth in our lives as Christians, and the anomaly of this situation in India especially, where religion is traditionally so deeply rooted in a simple and contemplative way of life.

3. I think therefore that it is true that the "ashram movement" was never primarily concerned with the struggle for justice. I agree too that most of us involved in it would probably have said, if asked, that greed was the root of economic poverty and underdevelopment in Asia, as elsewhere; and we would surely have been right in this I think that we were also aware that institutions and structures only too often develop their own semi-autonomous forms of greed, they are after all the creation of individuals or groups who may quite frequently be motivated by various forms of personal or collective desire for gain However, we probably did not advert to this much. Our first preoccupation lay elsewhere.

4. I am, then, not sure that we "lacked the full perspective", nor that with greater enlightenment we would have "actually participated in the struggle" of the poor more actively than we did We saw our role differently, and many of us still do. Experience shows — and men and women actively involved in work "with the people" have often confirmed this — that there is a great need for places to which those in the field can go to recover their perspective, to take the time and leisure for a depth of prayer that will sustain them in the often exhausting, frustrating and only too easily embittering labour of their daily living Personally I do not see that those who give their whole lives to providing such resource-centres for fellow-men in need, living as simply as possible, welcoming all comers without distinction of caste, creed, community, race or class, and themselves remaining so far as they can at the Source of existence that alone gives ultimate meaning even to the struggle for justice, are in merely "pasive solidarity" with those involved in the laborious task of helping to develop a more just society — a task which, incidentally, is laid upon each one of us without exception We have here, it seems to me, simply one more contemporary instance of the very old truth that the hands and feet cannot say to the heart: "We have no need of you", nor can the heart reject the hands and feet We all need each other in our great shared task of seeking to establish the kingdom of God, already among us and yet still to come A clearer understanding of each other's specific roles in this joint undertaking can only lead to a deeper mutual appreciation and closer collaboration among us.

Sara GRANT, rscj

Continued from p. 468

of his own encounter with Muslims and his study of Islam. Thus the student will be drawn to pay attention to neglected and frequently misunderstood elements of popular Muslim religious practice and belief

Christian W. TROLL, S.J

Book Reviews

Preaching

A Practical Guide to Preaching. By George R FITZGERALD *New York/Ramsey, Paulist Press*, 1980 Pp 156 $ 4 95

Fitzgerald's is indeed a practical guide to preaching The introduction to the book is itself in the form of guidelines for Sunday sermons In the course of seven chapters the author discusses the art and skill that must go into the proclamation of the Word of God for the sake of the health and life of the Church Chapter two, entitled 'Critique of Self as a Communicating Person", is particularly enlightening. The ordained minister, who is commissioned to preach, has to 'learn' to preach In this task, the personal faith of the preacher is tremendously important, besides communication skills Faith is the key to the proclamation of the Word. Personal exegesis born of faith is also an important ingredient. The author gives useful guidelines for exegesis of texts, both biblical and personal.

The preacher should take the pulse of his audience The listeners are primary, for preaching must make a difference to their lives The preacher has to reach "where they live" Thus the author takes us through various points of congregation analysis Only if the congregation knows that you care for them and respect and love them, will they forgive you for presuming to speak God's Word into their lives Then only can you expect them to listen to God's judgment which you pronounce To fulfil this task, the preacher must be pastorally attuned to peolep's lives In the chapter "From Pulpit to Pew", the author examines a number of technical points of communication, together with some communication theories but with special attention to religious communication In the chapter on "Images on Preaching", he pleads for a language that is at once simple and conducive to the spiritual edification of the people — a point to be kept in mind by preachers inclined to "theological God-talk".

In keeping with the book's nature as a preacher's guide-book, each chapter contains at the end points and exercises for study and reflection Appendices offer model sermons, models of critique, and a useful reading list about preaching Every priest conscious of his mission to preach and desirous of responding to it will find the book a great help

A AROKIASAMY, S J

Church and Liberation

The South African Churches in a Revolutionary Situation. By Marjorie HOPE and James YOUNG *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books*, 1981 Pp xiii-268. $ 9 95

The title of the book is appropriate A revolutionary situation indeed, for in S Africa 22 million voteless Africans (Blacks) are dominated, oppressed and suppressed by some 4 3 million Afrikaans- and English-speaking Whites There are also 2 5 million mixed-race Coloreds and 750 000 Asians, mostly Indians Their fate is no better, if not worse Such an iniquitous situation was until recently justified by a theological ideology which based the superiority of Calvinist Whites on an "interpretation" of the Old Testament It is a matter of deep shame that ideology combined with vested interests perpetuated such a situation for two centuries

The co-authors of the volume have made an almost complete study of the Christian Churches in this revolutionary situation They try to answer the question how do the Churches, divided among themselves, respond to this massive racist problem which affects the every day life of millions of people? Only a study on the spot could provide an answer; and this is what the book offers It is repleted with interviews, descriptions of visits, encounters, personalities, townships, etc Those living contacts make the reading of the book fascinating.

The authors divide their treatment into three parts: the historical background until 1960 (chs 1 to 4), the State and the Churches, 1960-1980 (chs 5 to 17), the future (chs 18 to 20).

All the Churches are reviewed, in their past and present attitudes, with the divergences of opinion among their members, the various efforts to overcome racial tensions, to challenge a government with racial prejudices, to indigenise and build local Churches. By and large Catholics fare rather well under the pen of authors who belong to the Quaker community. Not only is the Catholic Church the only one whose membership increased in recent times, but it is also the one with the clearest principles and the least ambiguous attitudes

One clear result of the many pieces of analysis found here is that ecumenism has grown and continues to grow much due to the fact that the Churches, by and large, have made a common front against racism Moreover, the advent of Black Theology bridges the differences between the Churches' doctrinal positions and actually helps to solve them, without indulging in syncretist solutions

The authors try in an epilogue to explain in some details what the future could be Politically, nothing can be predicted for sure, but it is likely that within the next ten years Black power will prevail more and more As for the Churches, their only, but indispensable, role is to continue, without minding the cost, to work unremittingly for justice and equality. The experience of the last few years shows that they have overcome a fear complex, this is a positive sign for the future

E R HAMBYE, S J

Religion and the Revolt of the Oppressed. By M M THOMAS *Delhi, ISPCK*, 1981 Pp 69 Rs 15.

Dr M M Thomas is well known for his fresh approach to the problems which besiege Christianity today His well-known ecumenical outlook is verified in the case of this new publication, where the recent papal encyclicals are often quoted

The booklet is made up of four lectures delivered in July 1980 at the United Theological College, Bangalore In the first lecture Dr Thomas deals with the relation, often painful, between Christian ecumenism and secular ecumenism This is the "crisis of growth", generally felt in Christian ecumenism in the last few years. India is no exception, where apart from some exceptions here and there, ecumenism is in the doldrums. One of the reasons for this is the Churches' failure to integrate social justice into evangelism and Christian doctrinal development.

In his second talk, Dr Thomas examines the ways and means through which the Christian spirit should enliven the technological world, including the threats it poses to man's survival. The third talk comes closer to the title of the booklet Here Dr Thomas studies the problems raised and proposes solutions for a Christian involvement in social and political action, especially in the context of the revolt of the poor and the oppressed He warns Christians of the danger of seeing the liberated ones of yesterday becoming the oppressors of tomorrow.

The last paper is entitled. "Dialogue with Secular and Religious Faiths". In the author's opinion the two can no longer be separated from each other He rightly dispels two illusions of our times first, the "scientific" character too easily claimed by modern ideologies, second, the claim of many a theologian to be inspired by pure faith, while they often labour under the influence of some human, social vision of the world

E R HAMBYE, S J

Worship and Liberation

Worship and Politics. By Rafael AVILA *Maryknoll, Orbis Books*, 1981 Pp xviii-124 $ 6.95.

This is an English translation of a Spanish book published at Bogota, Columbia, in 1977. The author deals with the often recurring question should the liturgy, above all the Eucharist, reflect the concrete situations in which the worshippers find themselves? The author writes from the perspective of the Latin American struggle for liberation, where the question has special urgency

His study falls into three chapters In the first one he describes the various cultic rites of the Israelite people as they were confronted with a succession of exiles, oppressions, and rehabilitations He does not hide that after having established the facts from the best sources available he re-interprets them within the ideology of liberation theology. In the second chapter he reviews with a great wealth of documents the transition from cultic Israel to the worship of the early Church and of later centuries. Then Vatican II and post-Conciliar developments lead him to the conclusion that indeed Catholic liturgy must express the struggle for liberation and similar options. The last chapter offers both reflections and a programme for a meaningful

celebration of the Eucharist in the Latin American context of today and tomorrow

In many ways the book is refreshing and enlightening One may differ from the author on the choice of documentation and on his often challenging interpretations. He could have consulted some of L. Bouyer's works, for instance *Rite and Man* I am not sure either that his views on the forms of worship introduced by the reformers of the 16th century are true to actual facts Eastern Christian liturgists are not likely to agree with some of his opinions on liturgical theology and changes.

Be this as it may, the study reveals a great desire for meaningfulness in liturgy. This is a crying need, especially in countries where a pietistic spirituality has unfortunately prevailed until very recently E R. HAMBYE, S J

Liturgical and Social Justice. Edited by Mark SEARLE *Collegeville, Minnesota, The Liturgical Press*, 1980 Pp 102 $ 5 50

When people speak of making the liturgy meaningful and relevant, the Eucharist is almost always intended Fortunately in this small book, which contains four articles by different authors, the relation between worship and social justice extends to all liturgical actions, including the divine office itself

How far can it be said that in the remote past, going back to the first centuries themselves, the liturgy always and everywhere reflected the chief concerns of the day? This is not an easy question to answer Here and there we meet clear allusions to the context Apart from those, the Christian sense for justice and charity derived its strength from participation in the liturgy itself and the biblical proclamation that went with it Being the revelation of God's justice, as Mark Searle expresses it so well in the first paper, Christian worship served for centuries as inspiration leading to praxis

Liturgy, as the cult of the Christian community, challenges it, or at least should, as well as the world around it This is in particular the function of the homily, which is to be viewed as an integral part of the liturgical service R Duffy observes rightly in his enlightening essay: "We can only worship God because our need is constantly answered by his free and freeing gift (justification), and others' need tests the gift we have been freely given" (p 87).

E. R. HAMBYE, S.J.

Yoga and Hesychasm

Yoga ed esicasmo. By Flavio POLI *Bologna, Editrice Missionaria Italiana*, 1981 Pp 222 Lire 10 000.

Ever since the early fifties the similarities between the practices of Hesychasm (the Jesus Prayer movement) and the various types of Yoga have been noted and studied (cf, e g, Cuttat, Gnoli, Monchanin, Becker, Eliade, Bloom, Nölle, etc) The question remains whether we are dealing with a parallel development in the Christian and Hindu/Buddhist East, or whether there has been a notable influence of Eastern spirituality on the Christian tradition Poli contributes a very competent study of the question, summarising an amazing amount of very precise information on both traditions He first studies Yoga in its various forms its roots which, against Filliozat and in agreement with Eliade he thinks must be sought in a Pan-Asiatic Shamanism, its expressions in the early Upanishads and Gita, in Jainism and Buddhism its important influence on the Āyurveda and the medical traditions of India, and finally Patanjali's system, the late Upanishads and the Tantric Hathayoga The second part of the book studies the various stages of the development of the Hesychast tradition from the early Fathers down to the Russian *Way of the Pilgrim* of the 19th century (passing through Climacus, S Simeon Palamas, Mount Athos, the Philokalia, etc) The third part gives very interesting information about the actual contacts between ancient India and the Mediterranean world, both before and after Islam Although the question put at the beginning remains open the evidence suggests a historical link between the two traditions More recent evidence has been unearthed elsewhere (cf VIDYAJYOTI, 1978 468-472) and some of it was presented in a scholarly lecture delivered by J Filliozat during the Fifth International Sanskrit Conference at Varanasi in 1981 I note a few question-marks and minor points for correction in the book I do not think that the word *yoga* in Tait Up 2, 4 has the meaning of "discipline" (p 52), as it occurs there in a ritual context, the derivation of *ap*, water from the prefix *apa* (p. 83) cannot be taken seriously, de Lubac's quotations from St Augustine (p 167) are truncated, resulting in wrong information — the saint does not say that the *gymnosophists* have a right idea of God (they belong in fact to the earthly city) but

that philosophers in India (in general) have (*De Civ Dei*, 8, 9), finally on p 183 Bornand's name is twice misspelled differently. But the book is excellent and we hope that an English version may be made available soon

G GISPERT-SAUCH, S J

Apologetics

Śankara's Concept of Reality. By Moti Lal PANDIT *New Delhi, Select Books*, 1981 Pp xvi-96 Rs 45

Did Marx Kill God By Moti Lal PANDIT *Delhi ISPCK* 1981 Pp xx-120. Rs 25

These two books by the prolific writer, Mr Pandit, are sponsored by TRACI (Theological Research and Communication Institute), New Delhi Both present the doctrines of important and influential thinkers and contrast them with the Christian view of reality, man and history The exposition of the philosophies or theologies in question is lucid, systematic, and competently done, though naturally given the limited length of the books, in a rather general manner The books can therefore serve as useful introductions to the two masters In the first book one finds Śankara's teachings on being, Brahman māyā saguna Brahman and jiva in separate chapters, while the Christian view is given in an epilogue that covers only one fourth of the space In the second book Marx's view of man and history is followed by two chapters on the Christian view on the same, strongly supported by Biblical references A long epilogue covers the same topics in a more philosophical manner The introduction seems to be more sympathetic and open to the Marxist insights than is the rest of the book, which really belongs to the genre of apologetics In both studies one misses the dialogal approach in that the valid points and useful insights of the systems studied are not sufficiently brought out, and the language of the Christian never meets the language of the Marxist or the Vedantin Two views are contrasted as complete philosophies rather than made to speak to each other There is no reference to the Indian reality and tradition (even to Indian Marxism) in the book on Marx, and no questioning from Marxist ideology in the book on Śankara The ISPCK publication contains surely more than double the matter of the other book, though it costs about half the price

G GISPERT-SAUCH, S J

Modern Hinduism

Religion in Modern India Edited by Robert D BAIRD. *New Delhi, Manohar*, 1981 Pp xiv-497. Rs 160

This book presents itself as an updated study on the area covered by the deservedly famous book of Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India* (London, 1915), a book which has served many generations of students as an introduction to the religious situation in "Modern India". Perhaps the actual contents of Baird's new work come closer to D S Sarma's *Studies in the Renaissance of Hinduism* (Banares 1944), except that, like Farquhar, Baird includes studies on Muslim movements and personalities The book is divided into three pars I *Movements* (Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj, Ramakrishna Movement, Divine Life Society, Ahmadiya Movement and the Jamia Millia Islamia), II *Thinkers* (Rammohan Roy, Dayananda, Vivekananda, Gandhi, Tagore, Aurobindo, Radhakrishnan, Iqbal and Shibli Nu'mani), III "*Religion and National Goals*", the most original part of the book, studying the incidence of religion on national goals in independent India Secularism in the Indian Constitution, the move towards a uniform civil code and its implications for the secularization of all law, the politicised Hinduism represented by the Mahāsabhā and the more open approach of the Janata movement studied only through the prism of Jayprakash Narayan's writings

Unlike Farquhar's and Sarma's works, the nineteen chapters of this book are written by thirteen different scholars, mostly from the new North American school of Orientalism As academicians, they are free from the missionary perspectives of Farquhar, but also more remote from the actual world they describe than either Farquhar or Sarma They bring to their study the fruits of much writing on Indian history done in the American universities in the last twenty years, as one can see from the abundant bibliography they quote In this way the book is a very good introduction to many fields of research Some of the chapters suppose an elementary knowledge of the area covered and of the general background history,

but they are in general easy to follow and quite informative. Few just give a new summary of information available, most relate the movements and personalities they study to the religious and local conditions of the times, with a longer historical perspective than was possible for Farquhar. Besides the last section, perhaps the most original and controversial essay is George M William's "Swami Vivekananda: Archetypal Hero or Doubting Saint ?", wherein there is a subdued plea for more open research and a less controlled access to the original sources I regret that no essay studies the recent trends of guruism, except for a passing reference in the chapter on Swami Shivananda The proof-reading is poor, and there is no Index The book must be recommended for any serious library covering Indian religions

G GISPERT-SAUCH, S J

Indian Philosophy

Śabdaprāmānyam in Śabara and Kumārila By Francis X D'SA, S J *Vienna, De Nobili Research Library*, 1980 Pp 218 (No price given)

Few scholars today venture into the highly technical and to all appearances barren philosophical field of the Pūrva Mimāmsā Serious studies on it of the last twenty five years could probably be counted on one's fingers And yet it is an important school not only for the understanding of the ancient Indian ritual and the theology that developed from it, but also because in great part it forms the background of later Indian philosophy, and develops the terminology which the great ācāryas of the Vedanta later used in their commentaries In this book, subtitled "Towards a Study of the Mīmāmsā Experience of Language", D'Sa has courageously delved into this difficult world and offers us what I think is an outstanding contribution that should reawaken interest in this ancient school. The outline of the book is simple enough, in spite of the necessarily technical and Sanskritic character of its language after a general introduction to the system (it already supposes a good knowledge of Indian philosophy), the two main sections study the great themes of the philosophy of language of the Mīmāmsakas at two stages of their tradition: at the time of Śabara, the commentator (5th cent. A D ?) and in the works of Kumārila, the theologian (8th cent ?) The great ideas emerging from the reflection on the Veda as language are studied word, meaning, their connection, potency, validity, authorship or non-authorship of the "eternal" wisdom, etc If in the earlier period the speculations, though deep, seem to lack direction and unity, they acquire a discernible systematic unity in the theologian The method of D'Sa consists in simply following the important writings of the authors studied, quoting, translating, commenting, comparing and illuminating the issues at stake Occasionally he gives us precious flashes of insight into the meaningfulness and relevance of a system apparently so alien to modern man But he is discreet in his comments, and allows the masters to speak to us in their own language and according to their own presuppositions The first chapter of the book and the conclusion to each of the main sections offer greater scope for the author's personal and synthetic remarks He insists on the symbolic nature of the Mīmāmsā experience and language, which was easily lost sight of when the system became reified He is not afraid of translations which will probably raise eyebrows, as when he translates *prītih* into "ultimate Significance" or similar transpositions The Mīmāmsā system does not require, rather rejects, theistic belief, because it is about Significance or Meaningfulness Says D'Sa "The experience of Significance which is both the final and the efficient cause and which makes a person out of a human being, is accessible to all To be a human being is to be an heir to an heritage of Significance that is as endless as it is beginningless" (p 28) Hence the author concludes that "the basic Mīmāmsā insight that the 'given' contains not only an indicative but also an imperative, that is by nature both independent and self-explanatory, is a truth of existential relevance That it came to wear diverse garbs with different names is a matter of historical interest" (p 202)

I am not competent to assess the accuracy of the author's interpretation of the technical parts of the system My impression is that this is an important contribution to Indology that should be available in all research libraries

G GISPERT-SAUCH, S J

Indian Muslims

Religion and Ritual among Muslims in India Edited by Imtiaz AHMAD

New Delhi, Manohar, 1981. Pp. 246. Rs 80.

Since the 1950's there has taken place a considerable growth in writing on Islam in India The bulk of this writing has been in the field of political, cultural and religious history, and often ideological in nature However, of late sociologists and social anthropologists have increasingly taken interest in Indian Islam We have by now many excellent studies probing in a scholarly way into important aspects of the actual life and behaviour of the Indian Muslims in different parts of the country

Imtiaz Ahmad, after having published two useful collections of studies on caste and stratification and on family, kinship and marriage among Muslims in India, focusses in the present volume on ritual and religion As he explains: "This collection of papers was designed to bring together contributions by sociologists and social anthropologists so that we could form some idea of Islam in India as a practised faith rather than merely as a theological and philosophical system" (p 2) The collection does not provide, however, as he states himself, "anything close to a systematic or comprehensive coverage of Islam in India" (p 3) For that a far larger number of studies would be required

The volume presents seven substantial case studies (two of them were published earlier in periodicals) covering various regions of India The contributions are based on fresh data collected by the authors themselves The first two studies deal with communities in the Kashmir valley and in Tamil Nadu They are principally concerned with the role of Islam as a basis of social identity in a religiously and culturally diverse situation Another couple of papers deal with life cycle rituals around birth and with one of the annual celebrations, Muharram, in reference to Muslim groups in West Bengal, Maharashtra and the United Provinces They demonstrate that the Muslims participate simultaneously in a local and an Islamic culture and that they do not see these as mutually antagonistic or exclusive, but rather as complementary The admixture of local and universal Islamic elements seems to allow them "a greater degree of pluralism in respect of beliefs and ritual practices than would be possible within the framework of the formal principles enshrined in the scriptural literature" (p 5).

The remaining three contributions deal with shrines and the veneration of saints Of outstanding interest is the lucid account of the origin, structure and function of the shrine of Mir Datar in Gujarat State This shrine "specialises", as it were, in the cure of mental illnesses and draws pilgrims from distant places Not rarely pilgrims with problems of mental health are referred by the staff of other shrines to this one which has "branches" in Bombay and Pune city The author of the study on this shrine argues that the therapeutic cure offered there gives people a theory of illness—not available within the theory of indigenous or native concepts of disease—which makes it possible for the patients to deal with, or come to terms with, their illness (cf pp 6-7)

At one point the editor supports A R Saiyed pointing out the need for the sociologist and the Islamicist to work in greater cooperation than they have hitherto done

"Sociologists", Saiyed states, "in response to the need and nature of their discipline, are more concerned with 'popular' religion than with formal or textual religion, and it is essential to remember that in the cosmological outlook of the Muslim masses, the former plays as important a part as the latter To neglect this reality is to thwart a proper and more complete understanding of Islam or any other religions" (p 141) Stray remarks and assessments in the present collection in fact betray a lack of familiarity with Islamic practice and ideology as elucidated in the best of islamological writing and a total neglect of the findings of empirical, scholarly work on Muslim ritual and religion in other parts of the Islamic World (e g, the relevant literature, mostly in French, on North African Muslim life) A second edition surely would like to remove the substantial number of spelling errors and of odd spellings of technical terms found in this first edition

We warmly recommend this volume to anyone intent upon understanding the great variety and the frequently surprising mechanisms of Muslim religion and ritual as alive in India today True, the contributions here assembled cover only a rather limited number of places and situations They deal only with few—though central— aspects of Muslim religious life and practice in India Yet an attentive study of these and similar contributions to the sociology of Indian Muslim life will stimulate the reader to put new questions within the field

Continued on p. 462

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An Upanishadic Prayer for Advent

NOVEMBER 1982

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JOURNAL OF THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

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Editorial

Inter-religious dialogue, no less than the promotion of justice, should be considered a constitutive dimension of the Church's evangelizing mission. But it raises many theological problems Not least among these, and perhaps the most acutely felt, consists in asking what is the right attitude to dialogue. Is the suggestion acceptable that to facilitate the meeting of religions the partners of dialogue must search for a common denominator between their respective presuasions? Are they, in the process, entitled to bracket out their faith? Or does not rather the sincerity and honesty of dialogue require that they enter into it with the integrity of their faith-perspective? After all, dialogue presupposes that we are two and that we are different. And mutual love builds on the acceptance of true differences No doubt, every genuine partner in dialogue, while keeping his identity, must enter into the religious world of the other, seeking empathy and real comprehension; this effort will take him beyond the level of doctrines, often contradictory, to that of religious experience But how far can a true believer go in this direction, if by its nature every religious faith calls for a total commitment of the person? Can one be a Hindu-Christian if, as is supposed here, Hinduism is not only a matter of culture and social organization, but a religious faith? These are mighty questions The least that can be said — but it needs to be said — is that genuine inter-religious dialogue is not easy, no short-cut leads to it. It is a crucifying process and those alone should engage in it who are prepared to pay the price.

The first two articles of this number approach, one way or another, the questions just raised For the Chuch in India Abhishiktananda has become a symbol of Hindu-Christian dialogue. The works published in his life-time have already revealed — and those in process of publication after his death further manifest — the depth at which he met the Hindu religious experience Rev. J D M. STUART follows Abhishiktananda's inner awakening and gives us a glimpse of the symbiosis he lived of Christian faith and advaita experience.

Abhishiktananda, however, was no theoretician of dialogue, but a practitioner. Building on praxis, R. Panikkar has over the years been concerned with the theology of inter-religious dialogue From his early writing to his more recent period there has taken place, as he himself explicitly states, a significant shift of emphasis. Fr A ADAPPUR reviews this evolution and offers critical comments on the later development.

Abhishiktananda on Inner Awakening

J D M Stuart*

It is reasonable to hope that when at last Christianity seriously sets out to lead man towards this inner awakening to himself, then the Christian faith will make a decisive impact on the world It is indeed a great cause of stumbling that the leaven of the Gospel has been so slow to penetrate the mass of humanity The law of love has been preached for two thousand years, and yet the world, even the Christian world, is still plagued by fratricidal struggles whose total incompatibility with the Gospel is felt by only a tiny minority of the faithful It is two thousand years since Christ taught his disciples that only one thing was required of them, namely, to follow his example in serving others, and yet human society, including Christian society, is still based on selfishness, the profit motive, power and the exploitation of the weak

Why has the spirit of the Gospel spread so slowly ? Surely one fundamental reason lies in the superficial level of self-awareness at which most Christians live and with which so regrettably they often seem entirely satisfied They are quite content with a Jewish style of ritualism and legalism, with rationalism derived from Greece and a juridical constitution inspired by ancient Rome They cannot allow themselves to be seized inwardly by the devouring Presence, or to undergo the experience that would utterly transform them and in the end would produce in them that *metanoia*, or total conversion, that is essentially implied by their faith [1]

ABHISHIKTANANDA was drawn to India, as a Christian and as a monk, because he was convinced that the great Eastern faiths, particularly Hinduism, bear witness to a spiritual reality of supreme importance His life in India was an inner pilgrimage, a personal exploration of that reality, into which he entered ever more deeply And at the same time he found himself entering at greater depth into the Christian mystery of the Triune God All that he wrote is the fruit of this experience

In what follows we shall attend first to Abhishiktananda's understanding of the fundamental Hindu experience, especially as it is presented in the Upanishads and realized by the sages, and then secondly, to his own experience as a Christian for whom the advaitic experience was existentially true. This is merely for convenience in

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*This is one of the Teape lectures delivered in Cambridge by the author in 1976

James Stuart is a member of the Brotherhood of the Ascended Christ, Delhi.

1. *Saccidananda*, pp 70-71

exposition, and it must not be supposed that these two sections refer to two distinct realities or to two stages on a spiritual path Abhishiktananda's experience was a unity in which the two 'strands' belonged together inseparably, though without confusion.[2]

Hindu Experience

At the heart of Hinduism is the recognition that man bears within himself a mystery, and that in the last resort this mystery is one with the mystery of the universe and the mystery of God himself The whole aim of Hindu religion is ultimately the practical one of finding ways to reach this central mystery It is not too much to say that this is what lies behind the bewildering multiplicity of India's life — the great library of Hindu Scriptures, the vast field of Hindu mythology, its complex iconography, the subtleties of its philosophies, its art, its culture and its social organization All is related in some way to the mystery which man has to discover in himself.

What is this mystery ? To call it an 'experience' or an 'intuition' is really misleading, unless it is constantly remembered that the awareness, or the awakening, to which it refers is something quite beyond our ordinary faculties of seeing, hearing, feeling or even thought For a Hindu, faith does not primarily consist in the intellectual acceptance of certain propositions or truths, even those which have been revealed Rather it is

> that interior sense by which the mind penetrates obscurely into those depths of one's own being which it realizes are beyond its power to explore solely by means of thought and sense perception [3]

In fact, though Hindus, like others, are tempted to attribute absolute value to the conceptual formulas and structures of their own religion, yet that religion contains many built-in reminders that all these are only expressions of a reality which for ever transcends all attempts to formulate it This is also recognized in principle in Christianity, but in practice many Christians all too easily forget that God is always greater than anything we can know of him, even his supreme revelation, since that too is conditioned by our finite apprehension of it.

To speak of the mystery we have to use words, and so there are recognized ways of speaking of the inner quest and its goal For instance, the disciple is to seek for *brahma-vidyā*, the knowledge of Brahman (that is, the Absolute beyond relation, and also the creative

2. Cf. *Saccidananda*, pp. 197-198.
3. *The Further Shore*, pp. 59-60.

source of all that exists). But this 'knowledge' can only be described in paradoxes; thus the Kena Upanishad contains an oft-repeated warning:

> Other than the known truly it is, and also above the unknown Thus have we heard from the ancients .. What cannot be known by thought, and whereby, they say, thought itself is thought, that alone know ye as Brahman, not that which people worship If you think 'I know well', only little in truth you know of Brahman[4]

This calls for the intuition of what is behind all experience, because as soon as consciousness becomes aware of the Source, it is no longer Source.

Again, the guru's teaching is intended to lead the disciple to *ātma-vidyā*, the knowledge of the self. The word *ātman* is often used simply as a reflexive pronoun for all three persons, myself, yourself, himself It can be used for the physical body, or for any level of the personal being But finally the 'knowledge' of the *ātman* is an awareness of something which transcends every level, even while it is immanent in all It is beyond description and thought, as Katha Upanishad says:

> Not by speech, not by mind, not by sight can he be apprehended How can he be comprehended otherwise than by saying 'He is'?[5]

Again, in the course of their meditation and teaching, the ancient sages were led to use certain pregnant saying (*mantra*) to express the mystery, when they discovered that the innermost principle of man and the innermost principle of the cosmos are 'not-two', in the experience of *a-dvaita*, non-duality· for example, *ayam ātma brahma* (This atma is brahman), *aham brahmāsmi* (I am brahman), or *tat tvam asi* (That art thou). But such mantras can only be imparted to anyone when he is capable of accepting them at the right level of interiority If they are, as it were, objectivized — as they must be by anyone who still thinks of himself, the world and God, as distinct — then they become disastrously misleading

The inexorable transcendence of this awareness is also illustrated by the apparent blasphemy of the text in Amritanada Upanishad·

> Read, study and ceaselessly ponder the Scriptures, but once the light has shined, throw them away, as you discard a brand which you have used to light your fire

The transcendence is given social expression in the recognition of those who practise radical renunciation, the *sannyāsis*.[6] Such

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4. 1 3, 5, 2.1
5. 6 12.
6. *The Further Shore*, pp 17-32.

ideally are men or women in whom the light has shined, the awakening has occurred, who are henceforth totally freed from all obligations to society. If they have a formal initiation (*dīkṣā*), it is an enactment of their funeral rites. From that moment they have no more family, caste, social or even religious duties to perform; they are *ati-dharma* (beyond dharma). They are utterly free, simply to *be*, absorbed in the realization of the glory which has dispossessed them of all else. To the ordinary Hindu they are a standing reminder and sign of the Beyond, to which he knows himself also to be ultimately called Yet the true *jñānī* (sage) does not necessarily adopt any of the conventional signs of *sannyāsa*, but can be himself in any life-style whatever.

The 'experience' is then indescribable, and yet it leaves traces of itself "It is as when the lightning flashes, the eye blinks and one says, Ah !"[7] Those who know, speak of fullness, bliss, or of *sat-cit-ānanda* (being, awareness, bliss) But such an experience is not for any to 'possess', it simply *is*

The Upanishads

Abhishiktananda was a devoted student of the Upanishads. In the Hindu canon these come after the Vedas and Brahmanas, and are referred to as the Vedanta, the end of the Veda The early Upanishads are usually attributed to the first half of the first millennium BC, and in the classical thirteen we find the purest and most powerful testimony to the inner awakening

What Abhishiktananda wrote as an introduction to the Kena Upanishad[8] can be more generally applied·

> (In them) we should not expect to find a connected series of propositions, logically deduced one from another The verses .are rather a succession of intuitions whose interconnection will not always be clear to those who are only familiar with the ponderous tread of conceptual thought The logic of the Upanishads is of quite another order In them everything — words, the order of words, the sequence or non-sequence of ideas — is aimed rather at shattering the accepted categories of perception and judgment in which we normally make ourselves at home These categories certainly succeed in transmitting some echo of the Real, but just because this echo is itself so satisfying, they very often prevent a man from going further and plunging headlong, so to speak, into the final Reality ..The Upanishad seeks to get through to the spirit of man by a series of touches, prods and shocks. The effect is like subtle but powerful waves, conveyed by the words, the images, the symbols, even the harshness of style and the disconcerting shifts to different levels of the macrocosm (the universe) and the microcosm (man) These waves come to

7. 4 4
8 *Hindu-Christian Meeting Point* (2nd edition), p 47

> us across the ages . . , originating in souls which have themselves entered into the depth, they seek to arouse a similar resonance in the very depth of other souls This is why purely intellectual disciplines will always be an inadequate preparation for understanding the message of the Upanishads — at least as inadequate as they are for hearing the message which comes to us through Isaiah or St John

The approach to the Upanishads, says Abhishiktananda, needs 'faith and devout respect', this does not conflict with the demands of intellectual honesty We have to take into account the findings of philosophy and the history of religion, so as to avoid reading in our own presuppositions That of course is not to say that we can ever read or hear anything except through the filter (French, *grille*) of our own mental make-up, our mental, social and cultural conditioning He himself certainly read the Upanishads as a Christian, and it was his particular joy to share with his fellow-Christians the 'harmonics' which many passages cause to sound in a Christian ear [9] But at the same time he was well aware of the danger of importing categories foreign to the Upanishads, which may weaken their impact He particularly warned against uncritically adopting the over-simplified and 'objectivized' treatments of the Upanishads which have been made popular by some modern neo-Vedantists In their attempt to interpret the great Vedantin masters, they often disastrously replace the actual experience of *ātman-brahman* with some merely conceptual expression of that experience

In Abhishiktananda's view even the great masters like Shankara are to be used with caution Their commentaries are no doubt true to the sense of the Upanishads, but like the mediaeval commentators on the Bible, they tend to be more concerned to find in Scripture the outlines of their own theological system and to maintain it against their rivals, than to discover the original situation and meaning of a given text For this reason, he says,

> modern men will certainly be more responsive to the fresh and direct appeal of the texts themselves, than to the unwieldy concepts of technical philosophy employed by the learned commentators [10]

A specially dangerous example of such concepts is *māyā*, which, applied to the cosmos is often understood to mean that it is simply 'illusion'.

One who has experienced in himself the truth of the Upanishads will certainly be able to extract from them "the pith of their essential themes", as Abhishiktananda himself did in masterly fashion in his

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9. See e.g. *Meeting Point* ch. 5.
10. *Further Shore*, p. 67.

"introduction to the Upanishads" in *The Further Shore*. But, as he says, it is very much more useful for the disciple to

> follow for himself the meandering course of the rishi's thought One may liken this to making a pilgrimage on foot to the sources of the Ganges which day after day winds along the gorges cut out by the river, as contrasted with flying over the sacred places in a helicopter [11]

Any study of the texts requires some knowledge of their religious and cultural context and also sensitivity to their vocabulary, especially the great key-words, such as *upanisad* itself, *brahman*, *ātman*, *purusa*, *prāna*, *vidyā*, *sat*. Some of these are discussed in the main section of his Introduction, where he points out that none of them can be given an exact one-word translation in modern Western languages.

> Every word is a cluster of significations (French, *sémantèmes*), and even those words which at first sight seem to correspond etymologically, in fact very often have quite different centres about which their significations have crystallized [12]

Further, as happens in every language, these terms were constantly developing, and so have to be carefully examined in each context. "Nevertheless all the apparently different senses form part of a whole, and their very diversity should point to the fundamental intuition of the rishi "[13]

The traditional understanding of the word *upaniṣad* (*upa+ni+sad*) is "to be seated at the feet of a master and to receive his instruction" — secret instruction, because it can only be given to competent disciples. But the Indologist Renou[14] suggests that the word really refers to the disclosure of certain 'correspondences', 'correlations , which may not be perceptible at the mental level, but have to be discerned intuitively

In the perspective of the Vedas and Brahmanas the universe is made up of correspondences between the cosmos and man (the microcosm), between the elements and functions of the cosmos and those of man (e.g , sun-eye, wind-breath, mouth-fire, etc.). Even more profound correspondences were discovered between the world in which we live and that other world beyond death, which we cannot reach either by our senses or by thought, which is inaccessible to our waking consciousness, but is mysteriously manifested in dreams, and even more mysteriously in dreamless sleep (*susupti*), when we are aware of nothing, and yet we still *are*

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11 Ibid., p 67
12 Ibid , p 75.
13 Ibid , p. 76
14. *L'Inde classique*, sect 590.

To the Western mind this play with correspondences may seem merely a fantastic game; but Abhishiktananda suggests that it may be regarded as

> an instinctive way — far more effective than abstract thinking — of living existentially and really within the fabric of correspondences which compose the cosmos and within which man himself inevitably moves[15]

By way of the elements and functions of the cosmos, of his body and of his thought, man is drawn nearer and nearer to his source, to the intuition that reveals to him the final secret of his being and of all that is. He discovers the universal correlations, realizes that everything is always a mystery of convergences, of equivalences. . ., that all particular *upaniṣads* converge upon a single correlation, the very 'formula' of Being, as it might be called. The themes which more than any others serve the rishis as vehicles of this supreme intuition are those of *ātman-brahman*[16]

These terms are very complex in their reference, and the oversimplifications of popular Vedantism can be very misleading *Brahman*, after a long evolution, comes to be used for the cosmic Absolute When the disciple approaches his teacher, saying "Teach me *brahman*", the mystery is gradually revealed

> by means of various kinds of approximation, by discovering each element or function in the universe as well as in man's being. Finally *brahman* is revealed beyond all approximation, and moreover beyond all possibility any more of being given a name[17]

However, *brahman* is used equivocally to refer not only to the Absolute beyond all relation, but also to the creative source of all that is As creator, *brahman* is sometimes given a name, *Brahmā* in the masculine. From this the philosophers developed a distinction between *nirguna* and *saguna brahman*, brahman without and with form When popular Vedantism applies its doctrine of *māyā* to relegate the brahman-with-form, i e , the creator, *Iśvara*, to the sphere of illusion, it loses touch with the non-dual mystery of the Absolute and its manifestations and introduces a duality which obscures the truth of Being, the one-without-a-second But the great Upanishadic seers had no need of this philosophical distinction:

> Their piercing intuition took in at once both individuality (*vyaṣṭih*) and totality (*samaṣṭih*), they beheld the absolute in the manifested and the manifested in the absolute, for they saw through to the depth of things[18]

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15. *Further Shore*, p 76
16. Ibid , p 89
17. Ibid , p 90
18 *Further Shore*, p. 91.

Reflection on the *ātman* developed in parallel fashion to that on *brahman*. *Atman* is the term used to indicate that which makes an individual to be himself, the principle of his personal identity. This can be discovered at various levels, starting with the physical In various passages in the Upanishads the disciple is led towards the ultimate truth of himself, to the discovery of his essential 'I', by way of successively more interior intuitions For example, in the Taittiriya Upanishad man is thought of as composed of a series of 'sheaths' (*kośa*), starting with the body, the outer sheath made of food (*annam*), each of which is more subtle than the previous one, the innermost being made of bliss (*ānanda*) They have to be removed one after another, until finally the truth of *ātman*, i e , myself, is revealed in its glory But it really is a revelation according to the Katha Upanishad

> The *ātman* cannot be attained by teaching, nor by understanding, nor by much learning, but the one whom the *ātman* chooses, he alone attains the *ātman* To him the *ātman* reveals his own person

Here again Abhishiktananda warns against philosophical attempts to define and classify, and above all underlines the danger of treating the 'Self' as an object or an abstract idea cut off from its existential basis, which is I myself, for this brings it into opposition, into duality with everything else, and so destroys its essential *a-dvaita*, non-duality

The summit of the Upanishadic correlations is the *upanisad* of *ātman-brahman*, the discovery of the non-duality (not quite the same as 'identity') of the deepest centre of myself (*ātman*) and the deepest centre of the universe (*brahman*)

> The final intuition has passed through every level of being, every image, every intermediary Through itself the *ātman* has attained to itself The 'I' which it caused to sound at the different levels of consciousness, the physical body, life, thought, the functions of desire and will, when once it is uttered in the deepest self, proves to be one with the 'I' uttered by the cosmic absolute, *brahman*, at the very source of its self-manifestation "That art thou" is the final teaching of the guru at the moment when the glory of the one light has shone from the depth of being and illuminated the world in its entirety [20]

The Śvetāśvatara Upanishad[21] makes a distinction between the *brahmavādin* (one who talks about God, cp the theologian in Western Christendom) and the *brahmavid* (one who knows God; cp the theologian in Eastern Orthodoxy) The latter of course is the one who is awakened, who knows the pure non-reflexive awareness, the *jñānī*, the sage who truly *knows* How is he to be recognized ? Not indeed by any esoteric character or peculiarity, like the gnostics of Christian

19 Katha Up , 2.23
20. *Further Shore*, pp 94-95.
21 1.1 and 7

antiquity who prided themselves on being 'spiritual', superior beings. There is perhaps one existential test of the genuine *jñānī*, that for him all 'oppositions' (*dvandva*) are done away. He no longer makes the distinctions which mean so much in ordinary human experience, between pain-pleasure, success-failure, mine-thine, death-immortality, and even (disconcerting at first sight to the Christian !) good-evil. His transformation has meant a complete change in outlook, in which his individual ego is no longer the centre from which he judges everything, as one normally does. Abhishiktananda suggests that this corresponds in Christian experience to the total change which should be brought about by a true conversion. In this connection he often quoted the text of Īśa Upanishad 6, which he understood to mean:

> He who sees the *ātman* in all things, and all things in the *ātman*, does not shrink away from, refuse, reject, anything.

Living Sages

In his exploration of Hindu spirituality, Abhishiktananda did not restrict himself to the study of texts. As is natural in India, he also sought out the living examples of the awakening to which the texts bear witness, and quite simply put himself to school at their feet.

India has been blessed with a succession of sages, who have been living examples of the awakening and have therefore been capable of acting as gurus to others. One of the greatest in recent years was Sri Ramana Maharshi, whose *darshan* Abhishiktananda had shortly before his death in 1950. His example and teaching were of the greatest importance to Abhishiktananda, and he constantly referred to him,[22] and the long periods that he spent at Tiruvannamalai in the caves of Aruṇāchala and in the Sriramanasramam were uniquely formative for him.

Of the many published accounts of Sri Ramana, one of the best is that given by Abhishiktananda in *Saccidananda*, chapters 2 and 3. The awakening fell upon him suddenly and unexpectedly, when he was a perfectly normal schoolboy at Madurai. He was not particularly pious and had no mystical tendencies. He had certainly not read the Upanishads or advaitic writings, and only years later, when he came to study them, he found to his amazement that they spoke of the very experience which had transformed him as a boy.

His own teaching, when eventually he was persuaded to accept disciples, was profoundly simple and direct. He never advocated any

22. For example, in his Diary, from which extracts are given in VIDYAJYOTI, April 1981, pp. 168ff.

of the spiritual methods (*sādhanā*) which had been evolved to guide people on the inward path and to develop in them that silence of the spirit which is the normal preparation for the discovery of the self If people felt that they needed to practise some form of yoga, he did not forbid it But he always advised them to aim straight for what is essential, and warned them not to be preoccupied with techniques, which often merely build up the ego and so make it more difficult to pass beyond it All that he urged people to do was simply to discover *who* they really were,[23] to 'dive within' and reach that point in themselves which is the very source of all mental and physical processes — that, in fact, of which the Upanishads speak, for example

> That which sees in the eye, thinks in thought, breathes in breath, yet that which the eye cannot see, nor thought think, nor the breath stir [24]

He also stressed that this goal is not attained by struggle and effort To strive consciously to arrive at this 'self-realization' is paradoxically the greatest obstacle in the way of reaching it Why ? Because to struggle involves the assumption that it is something that one does not yet possess — as if one could *be* without being oneself — whereas in fact it is one's natural state, *sahaja sthiti*

The other sage who decisively influenced Abhishiktananda was Sri Gnānānanda of Tapovanam Ashram, Tirukoilur, whose personality and teaching are vividly described in his book, *Guru and Disciple*

4 ***"Christian Advaitin"***

Many would question the possibility of such a conjunction of terms, or at least the possibility of giving to both their full value But Abhishiktananda's own deep faith in and commitment to Christ cannot be doubted, and it also seems clear from his Diary that the *advaita* of which he spoke was personally experienced In his books he naturally maintains a reserve in speaking of his own experience, but the centrality of *advaita* to his whole outlook cannot be understood if it was only something known at second hand Two Hindu swamis, after reading *The Further Shore*, agreed that the writer must indeed have known that of which he wrote

It is important to realize that when a Christian comes to *advaita*, he will not come by the same way as will a Hindu Abhishiktananda constantly stressed that everyone must start from where he is, with all his inherited and acquired ways of thinking and experiencing So far we have been following his exposition of the fundamental Hindu

23 '*ātma-vicārana*' is Sri Ramana's term
24. Kena Up , 1 2

experience mainly in Hindu terms, and particularly as presented in the Upanishads, the classical texts of *advaita* However, as he emphasizes in the last section of his "Introduction to the Upanishads", this experience

> has nothing to do with any religion whatever It is of a different order altogether It is the ultimate awakening of the human spirit, with which religions are now being confronted, as they were confronted in the past with the categories, first of mythical, and later of logical thought . It is absolutely universal The forms in which it is interpreted, the mental, linguistic, cultural, and even the religious context in which it occurs, may vary to an infinite extent It is true that during the period of the Upanishads India produced a truly remarkable expression of this experience but it is no less true that the experience is not tied to this expression, any more than Christianity is tied to its Mediterranean expression [25]

It is therefore not essential to use the Upanishadic thought-forms and language, even the central ones like *ātman-brahman*

In approaching *advaita* Abhishiktananda did not — indeed, could not — leave aside his Christian faith The following passage from *Saccidananda* must surely reflect something of his own experience

> The Christian also is no doubt aware that God is in him, and not merely that he comes to him, and that the very centre of his soul is God's dwelling-place He likewise knows that God is in *all things*, and in order to meet God he seeks to plunge deep within himself and within all things, in pursuit of his own and their own final secret The more he does this, the more he discovers the truth of God's presence, ever more luminous, more elemental He then searches in his heart for a place where he might, as it were, stand and contemplate this Presence, the inner sanctum where his own incommunicable individuality issues from Being itself and springs into existence He looks for that inner source from which his life and personal existence stream forth to be manifested on the outward plane of body and intellect He seeks for that fine point of his consciousness, that 'apex' of the soul, where more truly than anywhere else he might be himself in the presence of God, face to face with his Father where he might be an 'I' saying 'Thou' to his God
>
> Alas, when he tries to take his stand in the ultimate recesses of his self, he finds that God is already there ! He seeks vainly to recover his footing, so that he can withdraw into himself and try to save at least something of his own separate personal existence, like Moses and Elijah he wants to hide in some cleft of the rock from which he may contemplate God However, even the remotest and most inaccessible 'caverns' of his heart turn out to be occupied already, and the darkness in which he had hoped to save his personal existence from annihilation in Being is already ablaze with the glory of God *He still* struggles desperately to utter an *I*, a *Thou*, but now no sound makes itself heard. For *where* indeed could it come from ? And even if by some means this *I* were to be pronounced, it would immediately be submerged in the one I AM that fills eternity , the thunder of Sinai . All is up with him, soon there will no longer be any *I* to be conscious of any experience whatever, still less to be

25. *Further Shore*, p 99

aware that all possible experiences are finished No one remains to say "I have reached the plane of the Absolute"— still less to say "I have passed beyond, lost myself" Nothing is left apart from that consciousness itself, pure and unalloyed For man cannot see God and live (Deut 5 26)[26]

Yet such an experience should not be entirely foreign to the Christian, if he takes account of the advaitic dimension of his faith

His own Christian experience should certainly have prepared him to understand it, especially if he has carefully studied the Bible and the great mystics of the Church, and if he is open to the Spirit who knows both the secrets of men and the secrets of God (1 Cor 2 10) The contemplative Christian who comes into contact (for example) with the Upanishads cannot fail to feel at home with their general approach and their basic teachings, nor can he fail to recognize something that he has known in his own depths, as he listens to the sages telling of their experiences[27]

This has in mind, for instance, the uncompromising character of Christ's call to his disciples that every one who would follow him must *deny himself*, and that the only way to save his life is to lose it, in other words, the absolute claim upon a Christian implied by his baptism into Christ's death Abhishiktananda points out how superficially the call to self-denial is commonly understood — chiefly with regard to outward things — which leaves the ego unchallenged or even more strongly entrenched By contrast

Vedantic ascesis seeks to strip a man of his ego, his self, in a most radical fashion which no image or concept can adequately describe[28]

By it Christians are summoned to a much more realistic understanding of their baptism

Baptism necessarily involves the experience of death and nothingness One cannot be a Christian at a lesser price[29]

For the Hindu sage the experience of the absoluteness of God, the One-without-a-second, is supreme bliss But for a Christian the bliss is also agony It is not that he is unwilling to sacrifice himself to the Lord, but that literally everything — his very faith — seems to be torn away from him.

This radical purification seems also to deprive him of the Lord, *his* Lord, together with the forms in which he revealed himself and even the words in which he had spoken to man[30]

Church, sacraments, even the sacred name 'Father', seem lost to him, for in the blazing touch of God's absoluteness every sign is relativized.

26. *Saccidananda*, pp 63-64.
27. Ibid , p 66 It was a great consolation to Abhishiktananda that after the publication of *Saccidananda* a number of Christian contemplatives wrote to say that it had helped them for the first time to understand their own experience
28. Ibid , p. 65
29. Ibid , p. 65.
30. Ibid., p 66

It is no comfort to him to be reassured by his Hindu brother who tells him that the supreme experience has inevitably taken him beyond all the 'names and forms' of religion.

Central to the Christian's faith is the Paschal mystery of Christ's death and resurrection, whereby he is made a partaker of the divine life, into which he is introduced by his baptism. But does the advaitic experience allow any possibility for him in union with Christ to know himself as son of God ?

In *Hindu-Christian Meeting Point*[31] Abhishiktananda refers to an anonymous experience which suggests that it is not impossible:

> Another confessed that he too, in his contact with the Scriptures and sages of India, had felt a sense of vertigo, of losing his balance on the edge of the great abyss But one day, in the very depths of that abyss of non-duality revealed to him by the Upanishads and the experience of the sages, where the soul and God are 'not-two', he heard, as though coming from an even deeper abyss, the voice of the Father, calling him to be, in the Son, himself both son and creature This invitation had revealed to him a secret interiority which seemed to go beyond"[32] even that of the rishis, a secret whose existence could not even be guessed at apart from the revelation of the Trinitarian mystery the interiority of the Spirit, who is the non-duality of the Father and the Son "The Vedantic night", he concluded, 'is certainly a royal road by which to enter into the ultimate secret of the mystery of the Blessed Trinity "

This was indeed the heart of the matter for Abhishiktananda He found that within the advaitic experience itself, without in any way weakening, still less denying the experience of non-duality, of the One-without-a-second, there is still a 'face-to-face' with God In Christian terms

> At the very Source of Being there is *koinonia*, *co-esse*, 'being with', 'being together', community of being, mutual love and communication of life an eternal call to each other, an eternal rest in each other In its most impenetrable core of non-duality Being is threefold movement within Itself towards Itself [33]

Abhishiktananda was well aware that to say such things risked the accusation of indulging in meaningless paradox, that it was merely the expression of an obstinate refusal to abandon what had hitherto been treasured, even though it could no longer be maintained in the pure light of Being

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31 2nd edition, p 14

32 'Seemed to go beyond' carries a suggestion of 'superiority' and of Christianity as the fulfilment of other faiths, which Abhishiktananda did not intend to maintain See *Meeting Point*, p 106, for a more careful expression of the mutual 'relation' between Vedanta and Christianity

33 *Saccidananda*, p 109 Parts 2 and 3 of this book are a prolonged theological meditation on this 'advaitic-trinitarian' experience

> The human mind would seem to be making a last attempt to save what it can of its experience of individuality and multiplicity by carrying back this experience into the depths of Being itself [34]

Abhishiktananda never ceased to wrestle with this problem at the level of intellect, as the pages of his private Diary reveal, even while he doubted whether a theological solution could ever be reached. He certainly did not suppose that what he said would ever convince anyone apart from faith in the Christian revelation, and recognized that an experience of faith is "of quite a different order from the direct realization of being that essentially constitutes the experience of the Hindu *jñānī* "[35] But, different as it is, faith also brings its own certainty·

> At the new level to which he has been brought by the Spirit, the believer can do nothing except simply surrender to this movement which is beyond his understanding It is precisely in transcending even the highest reach of man's mind, in passing beyond all symbols and expressions of itself, that faith reveals itself in its essential purity [36]

For Abhishiktananda the advaitic experience is unquestionably true, but it has to include the experience of Jesus, which for Christians is equally unquestionable At the heart of that experience there is his secret and inexpressible relation with God whom he calls Father in a way that no one had ever done before "he cannot think of himself without being aware of his Father at the very source of this thought of himself "[37] He is completely transparent to God

> "He who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14 9) Whatever the Father does, he does through the Son, whatever the Son does, it is the Father doing it through him And yet at the very heart of all this, there remains the 'face-to-face' of the Son and the Father [38]

Jesus knew God as truly 'an Other', the I who addressed him as Thou, and with whom he had continual communion and communication In the depth of Jesus' consciousness, to be from God and to be one with God were essentially and naturally one. So,

> if anyone asks the Christian why he believes in the validity of his experience, he has in the end only one answer All his faith rests on the experience of his Lord and *Sadguru*, Jesus
>
> But there is also something else — the testimony of the Spirit who has awakened him in the depths of his soul to the mystery of Jesus, the Son, but this is a secret between him and his God [39]

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34 Ibid , p 196
35 Ibid , p 198.
36 Ibid , p 199
37 Ibid , p 81
38. Ibid., p 82
39. Ibid , p 201

It was at this depth, in the Spirit, that Abhishiktananda looked hopefully for a true meeting of Hindu experience and Christian faith eventually to occur In his prophetic vision he looked for the day when Hindu and Christian contemplatives, meeting in the 'cave of the heart', might together explore the experience of *saccidānanda* in silent communion and openness of heart Together they would be drawn further and further into the 'Fullness' of which both the Upanishads (*pūrnam*) and the New Testament (*pleroma*) speak, "what no eye has seen, nor ear heard, what God has prepared for those that love him" (1 Cor 2·9)

For this the Church and the world is waiting:

> Then God will be able to work on man in those depths of his being which effectively control him, instead of merely at the level of sense and those other faculties which he, always too grudgingly, makes available to his action Contemplation will then be given its place of primacy in the Church in the heart of everyone who seeks to make progress in the ways of the Spirit . Slowly but surely their experience of the depths of the self and of God will be diffused around them, bringing illumination and enrichment Human society will inevitably be transformed and at last, aroused by (Christian) seers who have that essential fire at their hearts, will become Christian in the true sense of the Gospel [40]

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40 Ibid, p 71

The Theology of Inter-Faith Dialogue

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A vast and ever-growing literature deals with inter-faith dialogue in general, and the Hindu-Christian encounter in particular Its inspiration is essentially Christian, linked directly or indirectly with Christ's command to announce the Gospel to all men Most writers either leave out or sidetrack issues such as the spread of atheism or the rise of "sects" in the contemporary world Dr M M Thomas' book, *Salvation and Humanization*,[1] takes into account the secularist trends within Indian culture, but does not deal with the problems of neo-paganism posed by the sects Before a more detailed analysis of this question, it is necessary to examine the present state of Hindu-Christian dialogue

I. *Raymond Panikkar on Hindu-Christian Encounter*

As an illustration of current thinking on the subject, we might recall here the key ideas of its best known exponent, Raymond Panikkar With his inter-racial origin, upbringing, and wide interests, Panikkar's contribution to Hindu-Christian dialogue has a special significance A polyglot and a prolific writer, his numerous books and articles have been published in almost all European languages He is widely recognized in ecumenical circles as an authority on dialogue His early work, *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism* (1964),[2] is intended to show the presence of Christ in Hinduism [3] He does so on the basis of the

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1. M M THOMAS, *Salvation and Humanization*, Madras, Christian Literature Society, 1971

2 A new edition of this book has been recently published *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism* Towards an Ecumenical Christophany, Revised and Enlarged Edition, London, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1981 In a long Introduction to the new edition the author explains that, while the fundamental intuition of the original book remains for him valid, yet he sees it now in a new light He goes on to say that the new edition itself represents his present position only inadequately His present position seems to find its clearest expression in a recent work, entitled *The Intrareligious Dialogue*, New York/Ramsey, Paulist Press, 1978, which we shall consider hereafter.

3. *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism*, London, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1968 (reprint), p xiii.

following passage from the Epistle to the Hebrews (1·1): "When in former times God spoke to our forefathers, he spoke in fragmentary and varied fashion through the prophets. But in this final age he has spoken to us in the Son . ."

Applying this Pauline insight to the Indian context, Panikkar comments· "We hardly know what the Son has inspired the prophets of Hinduism to utter and how he has taken care of his children in India, but we surmise that he has not forsaken anybody"[4] Panikkar awaits the day when Christianity and Hinduism will reach mutual agreement. Realizing the practical difficulties involved, he asks "Where do Christianity and Hinduism meet ? Or, what is the meeting-place for a fruitful dialogue between Hinduism and Christianity ?"[5]

The author assumes that, in contrast to the distant past, there is today an "authentic religious urge (that) can no longer overlook the thirst for an open dialogue and for mutual understanding The religion of my brother becomes also for me a personal religious problem "[6] A real meeting between Christianity and Hinduism cannot take place in the doctrinal sphere nor where Hinduism simply ignores Christianity or vice versa After listing a number of unacceptable patterns of encounter, Panikkar concludes "And here is our simple statement the explanation of which, however, may not be so simple Christianity and Hinduism both meet in Christ "[7]

This is Panikkar's personal belief which, he hastens to add, cannot be proved rationally A little further on, the author comes to the heart of the matter when he says that inter-faith dialogue is not

> a summit meeting of great politicians, but a humble encounter of living and loving persons trying to show fidelity to the higher and supreme will of God
> Culture is a man-made product Religion owns an unshakeable fidelity to God It is man-received , ultimately a God-given gift[8]

Panikkar's central thesis about Christ's unknown presence within Hinduism is consistent with the belief that Christ is the redeemer of all men. He writes

> It is Christ who leads every man to God, there is no other way but through him It is Christ who inspires the prayers of man and 'hears' them . . Hence, for Christianity, Christ is already there in Hinduism in so far as Hinduism is a true religion Christ is already at work in any Hindu prayer — as far as it is a real prayer, Christ is behind any form of worship in as much as it is adoration made to God[9]

4. Ibid
5. Ibid , p 1
6. Ibid., p 3.
7. Ibid., p. 6.
8. Ibid., p. 10
9. Ibid , pp. 16-17

The author argues that Hinduism can find the full flowering of all its potentialities in and through Christianity This calls for change within Hinduism, but it will be an enrichment, not a loss. "Hinduism will no more be what it appears today and yet it will be a better form of Hinduism, because of its elevation, its transformation into a higher sphere"[10]

Towards the end of the book, Panikkar suggests that in trying to interpret Hinduism in Christian categories, he is doing what St Thomas had done seven centuries ago with "hellenic wisdom in general, and with Aristotle in particular"[11] The author, however, feels that Hinduism, being neither pure metaphysics nor mere philosophy, but religion, is closer to Christianity than was Hellenism

> St Thomas was not dealing with texts and traditions which were considered inspired and sacred by people of his time For the Middle Ages, Aristotle was the philosopher We have been dealing rather with religion[12]

This is not a complete summary of *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism* The book contains over 140 pages of closely argued material, consisting of Panikkar's resumé of contemporary theological literature on the subject His main contention that Christ's salvific action extends beyond the frontiers of the institutional Church is not altogether original, though some of its emphases seem new

1 *Modalities of Hindu-Christian Encounter*

These points of emphasis are important for us, as they deal with the modalities of Hindu-Christian dialogue In another important work, published fourteen years later under the title *The Intrareligious Dialogue*,[13] the author takes up the question as to how dialogue is to be conducted He formulates in theological terms the ground-rules of inter-faith encounter with special reference to Hinduism

Panikkar rules out three basic attitudes as unacceptable today: exclusivism, inclusivism and parallelism[14]

In the labyrinth of models, proposals and counterproposals that make up this book on dialogue, it is not quite clear what, if any, final position the author is advocating. But ideas such as pluralism and

10 Ibid., pp 60-61
11 Ibid., pp 134-135
12 Ibid , p. 136
13. *The Interreligious Dialogue*, New York/Ramsey, Paulist Press, 1978, Preface, p ix.
14. Ibid , p. xiv.

mutual fecundation of religions recur on almost every page. A few extracts will illustrate this:

> Pluralism stands between unrelated plurality and monolithic unity It implies that human condition in its present reality should not be neglected, let alone despised in favour of an ideal situation of .uniformity [15]
>
> Only by *cross-fertilization* and *mutual fecundation* may the present state of affairs be overcome, only by stepping over present cultural and philosophical boundaries can Christian life again become creative and dynamic; obviously this applies to other religions as well.[16]
>
> Nobody can decide a priori what it means to humanize man, nor can this totally depend on a single anthropology It requires not a methodology, but a *methodic* of its own, which makes its way in and through the *mutual interaction* and possible cross-fertilization of different religions and cultures [17]

During a discussion in Paris in November, 1980, on evangelization and Indian culture, Panikkar returned to this theme: why is it that after nineteen centuries of contacts between Christianity and Indian culture, the two still remain alien to one another ? What is the barrier between them ? Is it theological, cultural, political, or profoundly religious ? In answer to these questions, Panikkar drew a distinction between two kinds of encounters: a) the West meeting India; and b) Christianity meeting Hinduism "No encounter with India is possible", he declared

> India is neither a historical category, nor an object How can you look for darkness with a lighted candle in your hand ? This candle will destroy the darkness you are searching for We want to understand (Hinduism), but understanding has a corrosive power over what is being understood Starting from discovery is already taking the wrong step One should rather speak of fecundation We should take the plunge, lose ourselves in loving, in suffering together It is essential to avoid contraceptives if one wants a child Up to now there has always been the fear of this baby (being born), so contraceptives were used My great challenge to Christianity is to have this baby with Hinduism a baby which it should not claim as its own Will it be Christianity ? No ! it will be Hinduism [18]

2. *A Few Observations on Panikkar's Theology of Dialogue*

a) Panikkar brings to his subject a wealth of scholarship and a wide culture. His interest in and dedication to promoting Hindu-Christian dialogue is reflected on every page.

His claim to be "100% Hindu and 100% Christian"[19] is without a doubt a novel idea. As the expression of his own deep conviction, it deserves respectful attention.

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15. Ibid , p xxvii
16. Ibid., p. 61
17. Ibid , p 91
18 "Vraies et fausses rencontres de l'Inde", report, in *Informations Catholiques Internationales*, November 1980, pp 51-52
19 Ibid.

b) The trouble begins when one tries to figure out what all this really means. For the orthodox Hindu, Hinduism is the most perfect of all religions and other religions, including Christianity, would be true only in so far as they fall within the broad philosophical range of *Sanatana Dharma.*

c) The main problem here is one of clarity and consistency. Take, for instance, the author's use of the word 'religion'. There is a radical shift in the definition of religion as a "God-given gift" in the earlier book to religion as "human tradition" or "theoretical formulations" or "anthropology" in later works. No explanation is offered for this change in usage Both definitions are inadequate and require further clarifications. If every religion is a "God-given gift", there is nothing a believer can do about it except to accept it fully; so inter-faith dialogue becomes a meaningless exercise But in a world where so much irrationality, superstition, injustice, violence and chicanery thrive under the name of religion, where even openly criminal groups bear the label of religion, it is folly to take the word 'religion' indiscriminately as a "God-given gift". In its contemporary usage, religion is at best an ambivalent word

But using it as "a certain human tradition" or "theoretical formulation" or "thought-system", etc , also creates problems. If religion is defined purely as "human formulation" then it does not tally with the belief that religions are bearers of divine revelations Without its transcendent dimension, religion itself becomes just one more man-made product amidst so many others in the market.

d) For Panikkar, inter-faith dialogue means two partners losing themselves in one another, naked, that is, "without any intellectual baggage" [20]

The author would be making a valid point, here, if his criticism were directed against man's excessive dependence on reason, to the neglect of intuition, sentiments and a sense of mystery But his unnuanced call for "intellectual nudity" can only lead to the other, equally unacceptable extreme of irrationality or uncritical fideism When human intelligence is not applied, the border line separating truth from falsehood, right from wrong, becomes blurred and disappears, leaving man a helpless prey to pressure groups and charlatans.

Panikkar's insistence on love, friendship, and sympathy cannot improve matters, as these words are bandied about by all and sundry across the whole ideological spectrum Nor is respect for the religious

20. Ibid.

sentiments of the other party a satisfactory answer. This becomes clearer when we see Panikkar applying his theory to such simple matters as the traditional Hindu attitude to the cow· "Are you so sure", he asks,

> that when you translate *gau* with "cow" you are not misleading the modern English reader if you let him believe that you speak merely of a bovine female related perhaps to cowboys, but not to *Kamadhenu* ? *Gau* is more than a zoological name as *Surya* (sun) is more than a mere name for an astronomical or physical body [21]

To a Western reader, this may look like the unravelling of some deep oriental mystery, but to most Indians, including English-speaking Hindus, *gau* is just one vernacular equivalent for cow or vice versa, and nothing more The same is true of the word *Surya* Even among orthodox Hindus, those who think of the mythological beast of bounty — *Kamadhenu* — at the mention of the word *gau* or cow, are indeed very rare, if any If Panikkar's interpretation is correct, then by the same token it should also apply to all the rodents and reptiles worshipped by popular Hinduism When, as a result of rational and scientific education, many Hindus are trying to liberate themselves from the bondage of animal-worship and other similar superstitions, why should the Christians side with the forces of obscurantism ? Christianity would thus be dissociating itself from those wholesome trends within Hinduism, painstakingly initiated by such outstanding figures as Rabindranath Tagore, Keshab Chandra Sen, G H Deshmukh, and Ranade India's national leaders, Mahatma Gandhi and Nehru, also shared these sentiments On all counts, we have here a healthy and welcome trend applying critical sense to the vast, uncharted domain of religion

e) Panikkar rules out all judgments of value as being incompatible with Hindu-Christian dialogue

> Christianity will not and has not the right to sift and sever the wheat from the chaff — so long as men are pilgrims on earth It will take and meet Hinduism as it is and will find Christ there because he is already there, as he is also with the poor and the thirsty and the prisoners and the persecuted [22]

This is at best a very debatable proposition, as it denies the Gospel its discerning role in the world. And, in any case, Panikkar is judging Hinduism harshly when he writes

> Hinduism has no dogmas, *Hinduism has no essential contents* Being only the concrete expression of the existential *dharma*, Hinduism can take as many forms as the circumstances require, each of them being relative to time and space [23]

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21 *The Intrareligious Dialogue*, p. xxvii
22 *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism*, p. 17.
23 Ibid , p 19.

This statement stands in open contradiction with the idea of Hinduism's being *Sanathana Dharma*, the eternal, immutable moral law.

3 *The De-kerygmatization of the Faith*

In an attempt to be even-handed towards Hinduism and Christianity, Panikkar presents inter-faith dialogue as a kind of tight-rope walking His method is to ignore the real differences between religions and invite everyone to join him in his plunge into the dark.

> If we accept the distinction between faith and belief, we may be able to agree to a certain necessary *epoché* of our beliefs, but I would prefer to call for transcending them altogether as long as we are engaged in a serious inter-religious dialogue . A non-conceptual awareness allows different translations of the same transconceptual reality for different notional systems without methodological strategies [24]

This approach is supposed to prepare the dialogue partners for meeting on one another's grounds, each having renounced his personal stand-point. In applying this method to the Hindu god Krishna, the Christian is advised to suspend his own critical judgment on Krishna's being a mythical character By the same token, he should also "de-kerygmatize" the Christian faith Panikkar explains:

> The Kerygma — like the myth — has its place within any religion, but the 'proclamation of the message' should not be identified with the reality religions aim to disclose The living and ultimately the real Christ is not the Kerygma of the Lord, but the Lord himself The naked Christ means also the de-kerygmatized Christ [25]

The "de-kerygmatized Christ" is admittedly one about whom a believer would assert nothing except that he is naked How is such a Christ different from the "gymnosophists" discovered in India during Alexander's campaigns ? Any attempt to answer this question would require a return to the Kerygma about Christ which Panikkar disallows. One wonders also why the author does not match his call for the de-kerigmatization of Christ with a parallel appeal for the de-mythologization of Krishna

g) The suggestion that all divergences between religions should be set aside in favour of mutual love and friendship, does not touch the real problem. Charity is no substitute for clarity. Where intellectual clarity is needed, real charity may have to express itself as a sincere effort to provide just that. Again, in the area of inter-cultural relationship, the very idea of love calls for clear thinking and rational explanations. Why should men love one another despite their deep differences, dislikes and conflicts ? What reason is there for followers

24. *The Intrareligious Dialogue*, p 43
25. Ibid., p 57.

of different religions to relate among themselves in mutual love and trust ? Even if it is true that love is blind, it does not mean that to be fully blind is to love all It is perfectly normal for man to ask for the reason why, when told to behave in a particular way.

h) Finally one is at a loss to know how serious Panikkar is when he talks about Hindu-Christian encounter as a mutual fecundation aimed at the birth of a baby. His repeated insistence on this peculiar type of relationship is so clear and emphatic, that ignoring it would be tantamount to ignoring him Possibly what he means is that Christianity and Hinduism have much to learn from each other and should do so to their mutual advantage This position is generally admitted today It is also part of the Church's official teaching If the author can lay claim to any originality, it is precisely in the "challenge" he addresses to Christianity to beget a child with Hinduism Even making liberal allowance for the problems of taste inherent in this language, one has to face the question as to how such a baby might turn out. It might be, as he suggests, some sort of religious hybrid more akin to Hinduism than to Christianity. This much is relatively simple In all likelihood it will mean a new sect, similar to the numerous oriental and occidental sects now in circulation The absence of a meaningful ecclesiology in Panikkar's theology of dialogue guarantees that "the baby" will be a new sect Whenever he tries to spell out the end-result of the cross-fertilization he is advocating, his style becomes obtruse and mystifying like that of other cult leaders He writes·

> A dialogal dialogue is necessary here This dialogal dialogue, which differs from a dialectical one, stands on the assumption that nobody has access to the universal horizon of human experience, and that only by not postulating the rules of the encounter from a single side can Man proceed towards a deeper and more universal understanding of himself and thus come closer to his own realization [26]

Whatever that be, one wonders how the arrival of a fresh "religious" hybrid on the world scene can be an answer to the question of the inter-faith relationship. It will simply be one more partner for multi-lateral 'encounter". The parent bodies, Christianity and Hinduism, will not and cannot disappear after the baby is born At best, the Panikkar formula can only add to the existing confusion by opening up a new *area of conflict — generation gap — in inter-faith* relationship.

The theology of inter-faith encounter which Raymond Panikkar initiated with much eclat in his early work, *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism*, appears to have reached an impasse in his later writings on the

26. Ibid., p. 91.

specifics of dialogue. Anyone who has followed the author's line of thinking so far is now obliged to ask himself in all seriousness whether the only way to carry dialogue further is to 'de-Panikkarize' it

II. *The Historical Figure of Christ — A Stumbling-Block?*

There is much evidence that when dialogue gets down to Christ as the one and only incarnation of God then the Hindus begin to feel uneasy. And they have their reasons The Lord of Hindu faith manifests himself to man not just once, but repeatedly as the following Gita verse clearly states

> For the protection of the good,
> And for the destruction of evil-doers,
> For the sake of firmly established righteousness,
> I am born from age to age [27]

Christ, as the one and only historical incarnation of God, is in direct conflict with this Hindu notion of multiple *avatars*. From this starting point, the Hindus argue that the Christian emphasis on the historicity of Christ is too risky a foundation to build one's faith on. As Vivekananda writes

> If there is one blow dealt to the historicity of that life as has been the case in modern times with the lives of almost all the so-called founders of religion — we know that half the details of such lives is not now seriously believed in and that the other half is seriously doubted — if this becomes the case, if that rock of historicity as they pretend to call it is shaken and shattered, the whole building tumbles down, broken absolutely, never to regain its lost status [28]

Here the reference to Christ is implicit, but clear

Gandhi, who endorses Vivekananda's view, does not hesitate to apply it directly to Christ·

> I have never been interested in a historical Jesus I should not care if it was proved by someone that the man called Jesus never lived and that what was narrated in the Gospels was a figment of the writers' imagination For the Sermon on the Mount would still be valid.[29]

Neither Vivekananda nor Gandhi seriously doubted Christ's historicity In fact, both of them accept him as a historical person. But they refuse to go along with the Christian claim that faith rests on or derives from Christ's life, death and resurrection taken as historical facts In the Hindu view, the Gospel message would always be true and valid, whether Christ existed or not. The quest for the historical

27 *The Bhagavad Gita* (translated by Annie Besant), London, Theosophical Publishing House, 1918 (first edition, 1904), IV, 8

28 *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, quoted by M. M THOMAS, op cit, p 27

29 M G. GANDHI, *The Message of Jesus*, p. 35, quoted by M. M THOMAS, op cit, p 28.

Jesus is simply a matter for historians' curiosity; it has no religious significance whatever The only way to bring about the universal brotherhood which Christ preached is to treat it as a universally applicable principle, distinct from the person who uttered it. Vivekananda explains

> . If it ever becomes possible to bring the largest portion of humanity to one way of thinking in regard to religion, mark you, it must be always through principles and not through persons [30]

Vivekananda was well informed about the 19th century biblical criticism which re-examined the historical origins of Christianity. His reference to "the lives of so-called founders of religion" derives directly from books such as Renan's *Life of Jesus* It is only natural that Vivekananda and Gandhi, both deeply concerned about the impact of Western rationalism on India's religion and culture, should have found a close affinity between the religious crises of India and of the West This perception may have confirmed them in their reluctance to accept history as a basis of faith

Christianity, however, has not only withstood those critical onslaughts, but, by welcoming them, has further vindicated its own historical credibility beyond any reasonable doubt. In Charles Peguy's cryptic formula, if Jesus could pass through the hands of the executioners why should he not do so for the historians ?[31]

This same Hindu tendency to play down historicity also emerges with regard to their own Scriptures Whether Shri Krishna existed or not, what is said in the Gita is eternally valid and true [32] Christians cannot share this indifference to historicity The Christ of their faith is either a historical person or none at all The specifically Christian role in inter-faith encounter at a deeper level might well be to explain how and why historicity is so vital to meaningful dialogue, understood as a common search for truth. To take this position is to run the risk which Vivekananda warned against, namely if the claim of historicity is shaken and shattered the whole building will tumble down, broken absolutely. This should logically apply not only to Christianity, but to all religions that base their beliefs and practices directly or indirectly on Sacred Books — the Bible, the Koran, the Vedas, the Gita or whatever. But can anyone who claims to be in search of truth shy away from its own logical demands for fear of embarrassing consequences ?

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30. Swami VIVEKANANDA, quoted by M M THOMAS, op cit, p 28
31. Quoted by François REFOULÉ in *Jesus*, Collection "Génies et Realités", Paris, Hachette, 1971, p 61
32 N V Krishna WARRIOR, Appendix I, question n 14.

At issue here is the basic need to establish some kind of relationship, however tenuous, between reason and religion When religion becomes totally impervious to reason, it loses its credibility before man's rational nature. As history shows, irrational religiosity can easily turn into a dehumanizing factor, alienating man from himself and from his word Such a state of affairs will only legitimize the rationalists and the Marxists in their criticism of religion as the opium of the people and hasten the erosion of those spiritual and moral values which are so essential for man's individual and social well-being.

1 *Respect for Other Peoples' Religious Convictions*

From the Christian side, it is absolutely necessary to respect the religious sentiments of their partners in dialogue, even when dealing with ideas and practices manifestly opposed to the Christian understanding of things Behind the Hindu belief in multiple Avatars lies a profound awareness of human fragility and man's deep-felt need for divine help to deal with deep-rooted conflicts within society The Christian also shares this awareness, which stems from mankind's age-old experience and self-understanding The basic questions religion raises or answers are linked with this universal experience The opposition to conversion expressed by so many distinguished Hindus also calls for sympathetic understanding

An excellent example of how dialogue can be conducted without compromising truth or friendship is provided by C F Andrews' letter to Gandhi A few passages from it are quoted below

> Your talk on religion yesterday distressed me, for its formula 'all religions are equal' did not seem to correspond with history or with my own life and experience Also your declaration that a man should always remain in the faith in which he was born appeared to be a static conception not in accordance with such a dynamic subject as religion [33]

After referring to the well-known case of Cardinal Newman in England, Andrews assures Gandhi that conversion does not mean a denial of any living truth in one's own religion, but rather the discovery of a new and glorious truth which one had never seen before Nor is conversion to be sought for its own sake Christ condemned and characterized as hypocrites those who made an external profession of religion without living in accordance with it The letter continues

> Christ is to me the unique way whereby I have come to God and have found God and I cannot help telling others about it wherever I can do so

33 First published by *The Guardian* (Bangalore, India) Dated 4 March, 1948, just two months after the Mahatma's death The passages quoted here are taken from *The Testimony of C F Andrews*, edited by Daniel O'CONNER, Madras, Christian Literature Society, 1974, pp 118-122

without any compulsion or undue influence. The Khan Sahib equally holds that Islam is the unique way to God and I would most gladly sit at his feet, as you and I have both done in order to find out more and more what Islam means to him, and I would sit at your feet also to find out what Hinduism means to you [34]

It is perfectly normal, Andrews tells Gandhi, for a Christian to think and to claim that his religion is superior to that of others. He has every right to do so since, as a devout Christian, he believes that the message which Jesus came into the world to proclaim is the most complete and most inspiring that was ever given to man:

> That is why I am a Christian . But I must readily concede to my dear friend the Khan Sahib, Abdul Ghaffar Khan whom I love with all my heart for his goodness, exactly the same right to hold that the message of the prophet Mohammed is to him the most complete and most inspiring that was ever given to mankind That is why he is a Mussalman . And you surely have the abundant right to proclaim to all the world the living truth of Hinduism which you regard as supreme religion (*Parama Dharma*) [35]

2 *The Search for Truth· The Greatest Value of Indian Culture*

The position C. F Andrews takes here is unexceptionable to any fair-minded person, be he Hindu, Muslim, Christian or even atheist It expresses respect for the deep personal convictions of others, while remaining totally loyal to one's own It admits too that religious convictions, which profoundly colour one's outlook on life and death, are serious matters They should, therefore, remain open and dynamic, consistent with the openness and dynamism that characterizes the human person Man must allow himself to be guided by the light of reason which distinguishes him from lower animals and enables him to arrive at the truth.

Here we are well within the range of the great values that Hinduism has always cherished. The ancient Upanishadic dictum *Sathyameva Jayate* (Truth alone will prevail) is India's national motto It is

34 Ibid "Khan Sahib" mentioned here refers to Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Muslim leader and Gandhi's close collaborator in the freedom struggle against the British

35. Ibid. With special reference to the delicate issue of conversion to Christianity, Andrews tells Gandhi that baptism does not imply "the renunciation of anything that is good in Hindu or Islamic culture The exact phrase is that 'we renounce the world, the flesh and the devil', that is to say the essential evils of this life I know that this would imply for a Christian the renunciation of certain things in Hinduism which you would think unobjectionable, such as idolatry, but there are Brahmos who renounce idolatry and yet remain Hindus .. There are certainly clear-cut distinctions between Christians, Hindus and Muslims which cannot today be overpassed But I do not think that we need to anathematize one another in consequence. We should rather seek always to see the best in one another, for that is an essential feature of love.... St Paul says 'Whatever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report...think on these things and the God of peace shall be with you.' That seems to me to be a fine way towards peace in religion, without any compromise, syncretism or toning down of vital distinctions" (p 121).

probably the finest and the most profound expression of respect for truth in world literature, and it bears repetition here:

> Only truth, and not error, will triumph It is through truth that the divine path leading to liberation has been traced, the path along which march the prophets who have overcome desire, the path which holds the supreme treasure to be gained by means of truth [36]

Gandhi, the greatest spokesman of modern India, defined religion — Hinduism — as a relentless search after Truth through non-violent means One could even say that Truth was Gandhi's constant pre-occupation in life His famous autobiography is appropriately entitled *My Experiments with Truth.* His social and political campaigns were called "Sathyagraha" (holding on to Truth) His entire life was an uncompromising pursuit of truth — a pursuit which led him to death at an assassin's hand. This Gandhian concept of truth is identified with politics, morality, religion and even God It is also an open and dynamic concept. The Mahatma realized that, if the Hinduism of his day had become "moribund and inactive", it was because a certain fatigue had made it irresponsive to growth in its pursuit after Truth

Here Gandhi was expressing a religious and human value that should animate every genuine inter-faith dialogue Truth is an integral reality comprising all aspects of life from the most mundane to the most spiritual.

For Gandhi, non-violence was the power of truth, an idea which came very close to Pope John Paul II's frequent reference to truth as the force of peace Lanza del Vasto, the well-known Gandhian of Europe, who assumed the Sanskrit name Santidas (servant of peace) has drawn attention to this remarkable affinity between Gandhi's concept of truth and the Papal teaching As an example, Santidas had copied out in a letter which he wrote on the eve of his death — 6 January, 1981 — the following passages from the discourses of the Pope

> Let us unite our efforts to strengthen peace by appealing to the very sources of peace itself, first of all to truth which is the unifying force par excellence, because it communicates by its own radiance and without using any constraint
>
> Truth will not despair of an adversary A man of truth will not confuse an adversary with the error he succumbs to On the contrary, he reduces the error to its real proportions and appeals to the heart and conscience of the adversary in order to help him recognize the truth
>
> To restore truth is first of all to call acts of violence by their proper name murder should be called murder [37]

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36. *Mundaka Upanishad* — this passage was quoted by Paul VI in Bombay on 3rd December, 1964. For the full text of the Pope's speech, see *Documentation Catholique*, n. 1439 (1 January, 1965), pp. 10-13

37. "Le message de Lanza del Vasto", in *Informations Catholiques Internationales*, 15 March 1981, p. 38.

From innumerable official declarations on the subject, we quote below just a passage from the Second Vatican Council's *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* wherein the basic unity of all truths, be they scientific or religious, is clearly stated:

> By the very nature of creation matter is endowed with its own stability, truth and excellence, its own order and laws . Consequently methodical research in all branches of knowledge, provided it is carried out in truly scientific manner and does not override moral laws, can never conflict with the faith, because the things of the world and the things of faith derive from the same God [38]

38. A. FLANNERY (ed), *Vatican Council II*, Dublin, Dominican Publications, 1975, "The Church in the Modern World", n 36

An Upanishadic Prayer for Advent

G. Gispert-Sauch, S J

Everybody in India has heard at some time or other the short prayer· *asato mā sad gamaya, tamaso mā jyotir gamaya, mrtyor mā'mrtam gamaya* — "from the unreal lead me to the real, from darkness lead me to light, from death lead me to immortality." It is well-loved and often used because it expresses succintly and beautifully the experience and longings of humankind its awareness of being caught up in a world controlled by death and pervaded by spiritual darkness which cannot be considered real or true, its longing and hope for a world where light and immortality will express true existence, and finally the humble faith that there exists a Power, a Reality — even if It must remain unnamed — that is able and wishes to lead us from our present plight to the fulness of Life

In the following pages we study the original setting of this prayer We do not comment on the prayer itself, except incidentally, but look at its *Sitz im Leben* (to borrow a phrase from Biblical scholarship), the actual setting in which it was first used by the Vedic community of India [1] But before doing this let us have a look at its immediate literary context in the Hindu Scriptures

The Literary Context

The text in which the prayer is first found is *Brhad Āranyaka Upanisad* (henceforward *BU*), 1 3 28

> Now, next, the praying of the purificatory formulas (*pavamāna*)
>
> The Prastotr priest (Praiser), verily, begins to praise the Chant (*sāman*) When he begins to praise, then let (the sacrificer) mutter the following
>
> 'From the unreal (*asat*) lead me to the real (*sat*)'
> From darkness lead me to the light !
> From death lead me to immortality !'
>
> When he says 'From the unreal lead me to the real', the unreal, verily, is death, the real is immortality 'From death lead me to immortality Make me immortal'—that is what he says
>
> 'From darkness lead me to light'— the darkness, verily, is death, the light is immortality. 'From death lead me to immortality Make me immortal' — that is what he says
>
> 'From death lead me to immortality'— there is nothing here that seems obscure.

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1. This is a summary of a paper presented at the Fifth International Sanskrit Conference, Varanasi October 1981 For a textual justification of many of the affirmations made here, one would have to refer to the full paper that will appear in the Proceedings of the Conference, in preparation.

Now whatever other verses there are of a hymn of praise (*stotra*), in them one may win food for himself by singing And, therefore, in them he should choose a boon, whatever desire he may desire That Udgātṛ priest who knows this — whatever desire he desires, either for himself or for the sacrificer—that he obtains by singing. This, indeed, is world-conquering. There is no prospect of his being without a world who knows thus this Sāman.[2]

The *BU* is considered by scholars as an early Upaniṣad, perhaps the earliest, dating probably from about the 7th or 6th century B C Internal evidence shows that the third *brāhmana* or section of the first chapter, where our text occurs, really belongs to the parent text of the *BU*, viz, the *Śatapatha Brāhmana*, of which our section forms part of the conclusion As the text we have quoted already contains a commentary of the prayer which obviously existed previous to the composition of this part of the *BU*, and as, on the other hand, the prayer is not found elsewhere in the abundant ritual literature of the time,[3] it is safe to conclude that in all probability the prayer must have been included in the Vedic ritual by a specific school between the 10th and the 8th centuries B C

The technical words used in the quotation we have given, as well as the explicit affirmation of the *Śānkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra* (henceforward, *ŚŚS*), allow us not only to affirm that the context of the prayer is ritual, but also to specify the exact sacrifice in which it is used and the place it occupies in the performance of the complex liturgical action. We shall come to this presently

A comparison of the third *brāhmana* of the first chapter of the *BU* with the first two chapters of the *Chāndogya Upanisad* (henceforward, *CU*) makes us believe that the school that produced these liturgical meditations was concerned mostly with understanding and glorifying the singing function of the sacrificial priests It would therefore belong to the *Sāma Veda* tradition (of which the *CU* is a part, although the *BU* belongs to the Yajur Veda) We shall see the important place of the ritual *word* of praise, the hymn or *stotra*, in the understanding of the Vedic sacrifice

The parallel passages from *CU* 1-2, to which we have alluded, not only glorify the singing done in the sacrifice, but also express the intention of the singing and the fruit which through it the sacrifice itself brings about The wording there is reminiscent of the prayer we are analysing Thus the singer asks that he may be delivered from the power of death (*mṛtyor ātmānam pariharāni*) (2 22 5), and receives the promise of immortality (*amṛtatvam*) for the person who remains in Brahman (2 23 2). The *CU* text also reflects on the meaning of the three ritual pressings of the Soma (which we shall study) and mentions as fruit of the sacrifice an ability to see God and to enjoy full sovereignty

The Liturgical Context

Let us now have a closer look at the ritual context of the *BU* prayer. We shall proceed in three steps. First we shall give a general

2. Translation by H E HUME, *The Thirteen, Principal Upanishads*, Oxford University Press 1967, p 80
3. With the exception of the *Śānkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra*, 6.8 9, which is dependent on the *BU*.

account of the *Agnistoma* sacrifice as a whole, for it is in it that the prayer is recited. Then we shall study the function of the specific morning singing of "the hymns outside" (*bahispavamāna stotras*), during which our prayer is uttered. Finally we shall see when, how, why and by whom the triple invocation is done.

1 *The Agniṣṭoma*[4]

This was one of the great institutions of Vedic India, the most important of a general type of sacrifice called *Jyotistoma*. The names of both the particular sacrifice and the general type stress the importance of *praise*: "the Praise of the Fire (*Agni*)", "the Praise of the Light". However complex and elaborate the ritual action, the sacrifice did not lose sight of its being a *sacrificium laudis* wherein the word is no less important than the action.

The *Agnistoma* consisted essentially of a triple (morning, noon and evening) pressing of the Soma plants and extraction of the Soma juice, to be offered in libation to the Vedic fire, as a gift to the deities of the earth, the sky and the heavens above. The drink gave the gods strength for the battles against the demons and resulted in their rewarding their votaries richly. The action of libation was preceded by the hymns of praise in honour of Soma and the gods: twelve major *stotras* (sung hymns) and as many corresponding *śastras* (recited lauds) which complemented and followed the stotras. Of the twelve, five were sung and recited in the morning, five at noon and two in the evening pressings. Immediately after the recitation of the *śastras*, in each of the sessions, the *adhvaryu* or performing liturgist poured the Soma into the *Āhavanīya*, the most important of the three sacrificial fires used in the Vedic solemn rituals.

After the praise and the libation were over, the Soma juice was shared by all the participants. The *yajamāna* or Sacrificer[5] and the priests partook of the drink, doubtlessly with a sense of communion with the divinities. For the Soma is not only an offering to the gods, it itself is divine Reality made present in the banquet of immortality.[6] Sacrifice, sacrament and communion, this is how K. Luke describes the Indo-European institution of sacrifice, of which the *Agnistoma* is the most prominent Indian expression:

> An act of worship performed by the community as such or even by pious individuals, it was not only sacrifice, sacrament and communion, but also an efficacious sacred action that provided for agricultural, animal and human

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4. For the study of the *Agnistoma* one may consult any of the classical works on Vedism, but specially W. CALAND and V. HENRY, *L'Agnistoma*, 2 Vols. Paris 1906; P. V. KANE, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, II, ii, pp. 1132-1203. Cf. also K. LUKE, "Yajña, the Essence of Ancient Aryan Cult", in *The Living Word* 81 (1975), pp. 233-259.

5. The Sacrificer (*yajamāna*, present participle middle voice of *yaj*, to sacrifice) is properly the *lay person* who initiates the performance for a special intention, and who hires the technicians, the priests, as his ministers. The *yajamāna* performs little but remains an important centre of reference throughout the ceremonial and the theology of the sacrifice.

6. As in the title of a famous book by G. DUMÉZIL, *Le festin d'immortalité. Etude de mythologie comparée*, Paris, Annales Guimet, 1924.

fertility and the cyclic rhythm of the seasons, served to maintain all forms and varieties of life, and helped to preserve in existence the whole material creation [7]

The three oblations and the solemn praises accompanying them were all done in one day; and so technically the *Agniṣtoma* is an *ekāha*, a one-day sacrifice But by the law of conflation so characteristic of ritual activity, numerous other rites were made to accompany the main oblations and praises, and these are also important elements of the sacrificial solemnity. As a result the celebration could last for one week, and it should be noted that animal sacrifices and other oblations blended with the Soma offering and its accompanying Praises.

Although denied by Keith, it is probable that the *Agniṣtoma* was a Spring Festival, celebrated on the new (and full?) moon day, and was therefore intimately connected with nature.[8] If so, the prayer *asato mā sad gamaya*, etc, was ritually recited at the break of day, in the transition from night to day, and in that from the dark moon to the bright *pakṣa*, and from winter into summer. In this context of the renewal of nature passing into existence, light and immortality acquires new resonances

Gonda sees the rite as a "cosmic adventure of Soma, reenacted by the priests for the purpose of sustaining the current of universal life" [9] Although in a general sense this is true, we should not forget the orientation towards a beyond, towards a life that is new and by contrast with which the present life is death This seems clearly indicated by the prayer we are analysing and other prayers of the ritual Let us now very briefly summarise the whole ritual of *Agniṣtoma* so as to place our prayer in its general context·

i. There are first the preliminary ceremonies: the invitation to officiate given by the Sacrificer to the brahmins; the search for an appropriate sacrificial ground,[10] and the "ordaining" of the Sacrificer through a *dīkṣa* or consecration which hallows him and enables him to participate in the sacred rite This special sacred character will be "washed away" in the bath at the end of the ceremonies (*avabhṛta*), and so he will be able to resume his normal profane activities.

ii Then follows the day of the "introductory oblation" (*prāyaṇīya iṣṭi*), in which the Soma stalks are bought and brought solemnly in procession to the sacrificial ground The Soma plant is already treated as an honoured guest and king, as it will produce the divine drink. The *dīkṣā* of the Sacrificer is now concluded and from now on till the time of the sacrifice he acts as if he was an embryo, about to be born to a new life

7 Loc cit, p 259

8 Cf. L RENOU, *L'Inde classique*, I, Paris, Payot 1947, n 718, P V. KANE, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, II, ii, p 1134, J GONDA, *Les religions de l'Inde*, I, Paris, Payot 1962, p 183, A HILLEBRANDT, *Ritual-Litteratur, Vedische Opfer und Zauber*, Strassburg, K. J Trubner 1897, p 124, A B. KEITH, *The Religion and Philosophy of the Vedas and Upanishads*, II, HOS 22, Cambridge Mass, 1925, p 327.

9 Op. cit, p 183

10. It is well known that there were no temples in Vedic culture — understandably so in its early nomadic stage The sacrifices were performed in open grounds specially consecrated for the purpose. There were also no images

iii. Three days of special invocations (*upasad*) follow during which the sacrificial ground is consecrated and prepared for the great ceremonies Animal sacrifices and other rites, more or less magical, are performed during these preparatory days.

iv Finally the day of the great *Sutyā* (pressing), the sacrificial feast proper, dawns Three times in the day, at dawn, at noon and in the evening, the Soma plants are pressed, the juice collected and allowed to become purified and clear (and perhaps fermented). The juice is poured in libation in honour of the gods of the earth, sky and heaven, and consumed by the Sacrificer and priests. It is clear that the triple oblation expresses ritually the triple step on the way to heaven, recalled in the all-pervading myth of the three steps of Visnu

The ritual pressings and libations were, as we said, preceded by the singing of the *stotras* and the recitation of the *śastras* The singing was as sophisticated and complex as the Vedic ritual Each *sāman* or stanza of the hymns was sung by a group of at least three priests from the Sāma Veda school Ancient texts distinguish in the singing of each *sāman* five different movements, besides the initial humming of the syllable *hum* a prelude or *prastāva*, the loud song or *udgītha* (which was introduced by the syllable OM and was the most important part of the singing), the response or *pratihāra*, the 'attack' or *upadrava* and finally, sung by the three main singers conjointly, the conclusion or *nidhana* The stanzas were sung in various modes, changing the order of lines If we remember that the morning and noon pressings had five hymns each and each hymn several stanzas, we realize perhaps why the 'praise of fire" has given its name to the whole sacrifice The *śastras* or invocations were recited in a simpler way

After the liturgy of praise and the libation of Soma the drinking of the left-overs by priests and Sacrificer took place The evening oblation to the gods of the sky and the final drinking of Soma was followed by the ritual bath of the Sacrificer who was thus able to re-enter his normal life, now fortified by his communion with the gods and the assurance that the great sacrifice would not be in vain

Perhaps a prayer recited towards the end of the liturgy will give us an idea of its spirit

> We have drunk the Soma and become immortal !
> We have attained the light, we have found the goods !
> What can the malice of mortal man,
> Or his spite, O Immortal, do to us now ?
> Bless the heart, O Life-Drop, which has received you,
> As a father his son, or a friend his friend,
> Wise Soma, whose voice we hear from afar,
> Prolong our days that we may live [11]

2 *The Bahispavamāna or Morning Praise*

After this general view on the Agniṣṭoma sacrifice we now turn to the morning praise during which the Sacrificer recites the prayer *asato mā sad gamaya*, etc

11. Taken from the *Ṛgveda Saṁhitā*, 8 48 3-4. Translation by R Panikkar in *The Vedic Experience*, London, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1977, p 367.

The Sacrificer is asked to spend the night preceding the Great Day of the *Sutyā* (pressing) in vigil over the Soma plants. The priests are awakened soon after midnight for early invocations and morning litanies, till the first glimpse of the morning light appears on the Eastern sky. Meanwhile the cake offerings are made ready and the water to be mixed with the Soma juice brought The wife of the sacrificer is also led to the sacrificial ground

A strange zig-zagging procession of all the singers, led by the main liturgist and concluded by the Sacrificer, goes from the sacrificial altar to the "place of praise" (the *āstāva*), outside the sacrificial ground on the North East corner The morning singing is in fact qualified as *bahispavamāna stotra*, because it is sung 'outside' Perhaps the direction taken by the group indicates their wish to welcome the morning light At any rate, it is significant that the morning praise is sung in the open, unprotected world *aparisrite stuvanti*, says the Tāṇḍyā Mahā Brāhmaṇa (6 8 10), as if to indicate that the liturgy that will develop within the hallowed sacrificial ground during the day has to be seen in a wider, cosmic context in which all barriers disappear (*aparisrite*) The singers are asked to sit in specific directions, their eyes raised to the open spaces The cosmic dimension of the ritual finds expression here. As Belvalkar says·

> Every single detail of the sacrifice was believed to be full of untold potential for good or for evil, according as it was well or ill performed In fact, all the happenings of the universe — the sun, rain, and harvest, births, death and pestilences, the course of the planets in their orbits, the success and stability of the kingdoms, the peace and prosperity of the people — were believed to be the direct result of this or that feature of the sacrifice .. It was the continuance of that (world-creating) process of sacrifice which sustained the world — provided indeed that the sacrifice was performed correctly to the smallest detail of the ritual prescribed [12]

Thus began the singing of the great Praise of Agni in the early hours of the morning, at the break of day The first *stotra* that was sung would read somewhat like this in translation:

1 Sing, leaders of the rites (to him),
To this pure-flowing Indu (the Soma juice),
Who wishes to worship the gods
2 With sweet milk your juice
Have the Atharvans mixed,
For God (Indra), the divine and godly juice
3 Prosperity (*śam*) for us pour, prosperity for our cows,
Prosperity for our people and for the horses,
And prosperity, O King, for our plants and crops

4 With its shining radiance
And resounding streams
The bright Soma is mixed with milk and curds.

12. *Lectures on Vedanta Philosophy* 1, 33-34, as quoted by Thomas G GOMAN and Ronald S. LAURA, "A Logical Treatment of Some Upanishadic Puzzles and Changing Conceptions of Sacrifice", in *Numen* 19 (1972), pp. 56-57.

5. Urged by urging worshippers,
The powerful Soma goes collected to the battle,
Like warriors entering (the battlefield).
6 For our prosperity and weal, O Soma,
Sage mighty and prospering, approaching
Flow from heaven (as a sun ?).

7 As you are filtered, O Sage,
Your streams are let loose like horses,
O possessor of food, they desire food
8 Towards the honey-dropping vessel,
They are let loose in the woolen filter,
Our fingers have desired them
9 The Soma juices go to the ocean
As milch kine to their stall,
They go to the place of sacrifice [13]

3 *The Muttering of the Yajus*

We come now to the recitation of the prayer we are studying The *BU* and the *ŚŚS* make it clear that it is "muttered" by the Sacrificer *while the singing of the morning praise "outside" takes place.* Let us break up this information

First, the prayer is muttered by the *Sacrificer*, Normally the prayers, like the actions of the sacrifice, are enjoined on the technicians of the ceremony, the priests The *hotr* and the *udgātr* speak or sing aloud from their main sources, the Rgveda and the Samaveda respectively. The *adhvaryu* or liturgist mutters formulae from the Yajur Veda The Brahmā "speaks" in a low voice or silently But there are a few instances when the *Yajamāna* or Sacrificer is called to act directly Although he has little to perform during the ritual, he remains theologically the centre and point of reference for the whole sacrifice. The priests are litterally his "ministers" A text of the *Āpastama Śrauta Sūtra* tells us what his functions are

> To the yajamāna belongs continence, giving fees, obtaining sacrificial materials and desiring the desires (i e, formulating the desires or intentions of the sacrifice) He mutters the mantras connected with personal blessings and addresses or recites in a low voice those not directly lined with the action (4 1.2-3).

Thus when he himself recites the formulae (called *yajus*), as in our case, he is as it were formulating the basic intention of the sacrifice, the *sankalpa*, as it came to be called later when the need of expressing the intention of the sacrifice or good works was emphasized.

The prayer is "muttered" (*japati*). The verb *jap* does not in Vedic times connote the repetition of a prayer as in classical Hinduism, but means simply muttering in a low voice Renou[14] has studied the

13 *Ṛgveda Samhitā* 9 11 1-3, 9 64 28-30, 9 66 10-12 Translation taken, with modifications, from H H WILSON, *Rig-Veda Samhita*, New Delhi, Cosmo Publications 1972 (1st edition, 1888), Vol VI
14 L. RENOU, "La valeur du silence dans le culte védique", in *JAOS* 69 (1949), pp. 11-18.

significance assigned to the various degrees of sound in pronouncing the Vedic formulae during the ritual, and the meaning of silence in this connection Hymns and formulae of offering are said aloud, by the singer or the offerer The mantras accompanying the ritual action (*yajus*) are said, normally by the liturgist, inaudibly (*upāmśu*), forming the syllables silently The Brahmā priest "speaks" silently, i e, with the mind, by thought, "with the voice held". In between the "aloud" and the *upāmśu* recitation there is the *jap* way of reciting, i e, muttering in a low voice. It is allied in many respects to the silent forms and partakes of their characteristics Low voice or silent recitation do not mean necessarily that we are dealing with less important rites (though at times this is the case) but, in more sophisticated liturgical theology, that we are dealing directly with the mystery, the *anirukta* (unexpressed) aspect of reality contained in the ritual Thus the *Aitareya Brāhmana*[15] correlates *jap* and *upāmśu* and shows that the mystery of silence is parallel to the mystery of the origins of life "When the *hotr* mutters the *japa*, he impregnates the seed in secret he mutters, in secret, as it were, he impregnates the seed " "What is secret is the work of Prajāpati (the Creator), for Prajāpati is unexpressed", exclaims the *Śatapatha Brāhmana* (6 2 2 21) The quotation from the *Āpastama* given above would perhaps sugest that in muttering his prayer the Sacrificer gives expression to the *personal intention* for the ritual, over and above the *ex opere operato* of the sacrifice itself

The *BU* text we have quoted at the beginning says that the formula *asato mā sad gamaya*, etc, is muttered at the "praying" of the purificatory formulas Actually the word used is *abhyāroha*, which indicates *ascent*, climbing (*ā-ruh*) with an intentionality or purpose (*abhi*) The "purificatory formulas" are really the Hymns of Praise of which we spoke, which ascend to the world of the gods taking the form of a bird, just as the altar itself has the form of a bird because by means of it one can ascend to the divine sphere Just as the morning, noon and evening oblations are seen as the three steps of this sacrificial journey, from earth through the sky and to heaven, so also the hymns themselves undertake the same journey and are mystical means for the same ascent While they are being sung, the Sacrificer expresses his personal intention which goes beyond the concrete fruits reportedly accruing from the rites, he reaches out from his position of non-existence unto the highest spheres "From the unreal lead me to the Real! From darkness lead me to Light! From death lead me to Immortality!"

It would seem therefore that the three-fold ascent (which receives its mythological expression in the ancient story of the three steps of Visnu or of Vāmana) is indirectly alluded to by the triple prayer We remember that the Sacrificer is waiting like an embryo in the womb ritually he has not yet been born, he is a non-entity The liturgy takes place at the break of day, when the darkness of night still covers the the earth, and possibly at the moment of spring when winter, the

15. 2 38 Cf also *Śatapatha Brāhmana*, 6 2.2.22.

semblance of death holding all creation in its frozen bondage, is about to end The prayer expresses the longing to come out of non-existence to the real (*sat*) of life, from the darkness of this world to the light (*jyoti*, often associated with lightning) of that place where the deities of luminosity reign, and finally from death, still possible in the realm of the gods, to the highest salvation, the sphere of immortality Śankara also gives a progressive symbolic interpretation to the triple prayer The commentary within the Upanisad itself shows rightly how the last part of the prayer is already contained — as their full manifestation — in the earlier petitions But it may be short of the full meaning to think of the three petitions as simply synonymous There is a progress, not in the sense that at the higher stages the lower ones are abandoned, but in the authentic ancient sense that the conquest of the highest contains and retains the lower stages The gift of immortality includes the joy of existence in the full reality of this world and the enjoyment of the light in its total splendour Conversely, the lower steps point to and are perfected in the gift of *amrta* Salvation is inclusive of material progress and cultural life One can compare this interpretation with the prayer of the Singer at the end of the whole solemn performance " may we climb the heavens, may we conquer the world " It would be possible also to correlate the three units of the prayer with the three aspects of Brahman expressed in the *saccidānanda* formula and thus bring out the full meaning of salvation But this would go well beyond the consciousness at the time of the *BU*

To Whom is the Prayer Addressed?

The Indian tradition seems a bit hesitant about the addressee of the prayer But if we compare our texts with other descriptions of the ritual in which another, probably earlier, prayer is mentioned, we get a clue to answer the question The prayer is addressed *to the hymn* that is being sung by the priests, which is "personified" as a bird and seen as flying towards heaven Some texts say that the Sacrificer mutters his prayer in the middle stanza of the hymn[16]— he climbs, so to say, on to the back, the centre of the bird-hymn and thus climbs towards the heavenly regions In the ancient context this ascent to heaven was related to the ascent of the rising sun. According to a myth often related,[17] in former times the sun was on earth, in fact in the very *cātvāla* pit found in front of the *āstāva* where the priests are singing But the gods, afraid that the sun might burn everything and desirous of having it for themselves, managed to get hold of it and take it to heaven precisely by means of the *bahispavamāna* Hymn And the sun is the place of immortality "In like manner the priests take hold of the sacrificer and ascend from hence to the heavenly world."

16 Hume's translation of the text of the Upanisad, quoted at the beginning, is not quite correct The text does not say that the *Prastotr begins* to praise and that the prayer is muttered "when he *begins*", but simply "when he praises" (*yatra prastuyāt*) Other texts refer to the japa in the middle of the hymn

17. E g, *Śatapatha Br*, 4 2 5 9, *Tāndya Mahā Brāhmaṇa*, 6 7 24

It is not clear when or why the more ancient and more ritualistic invocations of the Sacrificer were changed into the *BU* prayer, *asato mā sad gamaya*, etc The Upanishadic formula, so remarkable for its rhythm, its sense of growth and the depth of its aspiration, is new in Vedic literature. The prayer is the gift of the Yajñavalkya tradition to Indian culture and can be considered an adaptation of the traditional ritual to the new searchings, spearheaded by this school At the threshold of the Upanishads and therefore of all later Hinduism, this new prayer avoids the exclusively ritual terminology of the earlier prayers in favour of words more congenial with the Vedantic tradition Thus it summarizes the best of Vedism and introduces India into the new world of Vedantic Hinduism.

Conclusion

The universality of our prayer reaches beyond the Hindu fold We have shown earlier in this Journal that it probably found its way into a first century Jewish prayer in Greek which was later Christianized [19] It was used again in December 1964 by that saintly pilgrim to Bombay Pope Paul VI

> Yours is a land of ancient culture, the cradle of great religions, the home of a nation that has sought God with relentless desire, in deep meditation and silence, and in hymns of fervent prayer Rarely has this longing for God been expressed with words so full of the spirit of Advent as in the words written in your sacred books many centuries before Christ "From the unreal lead me to the real, from darkness lead me to light, from death lead me to immortality' This is a prayer which belongs also to our time Today more than ever it should rise from every human heart [20]

18 "*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 1 3 28 in Greek Literature ?", in VIDYAJYOTI 40 (1976), pp 177-180 and 230

19 Cf J NEUNER and J DUPUIS, *The Christian Faith*, Bangalore, Theological Publications of India, 1973, n 1031, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 57 (1965), p 132

Continued from p. 520

England Yet it provides enough data to show that there is hope for the future England has passed, perhaps is still passing, through a crisis of materialism But a new spiritual quest is awakened, and, with a growing number of dedicated clergy and laity, this may well lead to a large-scale revival Let us hope and pray

E R HAMBYE, S J

Note

More "Classics of Western Spirituality"

Twice already we have drawn the attention of our readers on the new collection, "The Classics of Western Spirituality", launched by SPCK, London, in 1978 While reviewing the twenty-three volumes of the collection previously sent to us, we have stressed the breadth of vision of the entire enterprise, the high standard of its publication and the scholarly approach which the authors bring to their subject (cf VIDYAJYOTI 1980, pp 197-200, 1981, pp 503-507) The collection is maintaining a quick pace of publication and we are glad to inform our readers of four recent arrivals

1 PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA *The Contemplative Life, The Giants, and Selections* Translation and Introduction by David WINSTON, Preface by John DILLON (1981 Pp xxi-425 £ 8 50) Philo is undoubtedly the greatest Jewish mystic, philosopher, and theologian of the Graeco-Roman period His basic vision is made available here for the first time in one volume *The Contemplative Life* and *The Giants* are translated in full Selections from other treatises are grouped under the following headings Autobiographical, Scriptural Exegesis, The Divine Mind, Cosmogony, Souls, Angels and Daemons, The Divine Transcendence, Knowledge and Prophecy, Worship, Mysticism, Providence, Theodicy and Miracles, Ethical Theory, Moses and the Law, Universalism and Particularism. In his Introduction Professor Winston writes "Philo of Alexandria stands at the apex of the cultural activity of the Jewish-Alexandrian community, his literary work climaxing a long chain of Jewish-Hellenistic writings whose aim was to establish the validity and integrity of Jewish religious thought in the face of the counterclaims of the intellectually powerful Greek tradition" (p 1).

2 *The Cloud of Unknowing* Edited, with an Introduction by James WALSH, S J Preface by Simon TUGWELL, O P (1981 Pp xxvi-293 £ 7 50) Written by an anonymous English monk during the late fourteenth century, *The Cloud of Unknowing* holds an important place in the history of Western Spirituality Long forgotten but rediscovered more than a century ago, it is today considered as a classic. It is a powerful witness to the existence in the Western tradition of an underlying current of apophatic spirituality and, as such, constitutes a link with the Eastern tradition It puts forward a method of contemplation which stresses the impotence of the understanding to break through the "cloud of unknowing" that separates man from God. Love alone can reach God in this life In his Preface to the volume, S Tugwell sums up the challenge that the author of *The Cloud* raises for us even today: "If we wish to follow him, we must be prepared to be taxed to the limit But if we have the courage and the ability to follow him, we shall not find that our effort has been in vain" (p xxiii).

3 George HERBERT *The Country Parson, The Temple.* Edited with an Introduction by John N WALL, Jr, Preface by A M. ALLCHIN (1981 Pp xxii-354 £ 8 50) At a time when England was racked by religious strives, George Herbert (1593-1633) gave up a promising political career for the simple life of a country parson. While busily involved in his pastoral duties, he produced works of poetry and prose that have earned him a long-established place in English literature The works collected here were originally published after his death *The Country Parson* is a prose treatise on the duties, joys and hardships of a pastor's life. *The Temple* is a collection of poems In them the literary genius of this humble Anglican priest is revealed, his spirituality is a synthesis of evangelical and Catholic piety, not without ecumenical significance for today

4 John and Charles WESLEY *Selected Prayers, Hymns, Journal Notes, Sermons, Letters and Treatises* Edited with an Introduction by Frank WHALING Preface by Albert C OUTLER (1981 Pp xx-412. £ 8 95) The Wesley brothers were the leaders of the revival that swept early eighteenth century England and resulted in the founding of the Methodist Church This volume gathers selections from the works of the two men From John's early period are taken his *Forms of Prayer* and *Scheme of Self-Examination* His mature spirituality is revealed in selections, among others, from his *Journal, Rules for Methodist Societies, A Plain Account of Genuine Christianity* and in his classic treatment of the fundamental theme of his life, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection.* Of Charles the volume presents a selection of hymns The work reveals a spirituality that synthesises in an original "Wesleyan" fashion elements from the Church Fathers, Catholic Mystics, and Protestant Reformers J DUPUIS, S J

The Restless Apostle From the Writings of Don Orione London, *Darton, Longman and Todd,* 1981 Pp ix-146 £ 4

Don Orione died on 19 March 1940 Thus he escaped from the horrors and devastation of the war, which afflicted his own country, Italy Born in 1872, he first joined the Franciscans for one year, but had to leave because of bad health Don Bosco certainly influenced him and after his ordination in 1895, the type of apostolate he launched into was much inspired by Don Bosco's intuition, particularly as refards works for youth

In 1921 Don Orione extended his activities to Argentina and Brazil, and later to other Latin American countries and to Poland He was beatified by the present Pope on October 26, 1980

As Bishop Butler writes in his foreword "The inspiration of his life was a burning self-sacrificing, love of God, spelt out in passionate love of God's children, that is to say of all mankind" But the first beneficiaries of his love were the underprivileged the poor the emigrant the jobless, etc

There is much poetry and fervour in the many extracts presented here from letters and personal notes, not without a touch of deep emotion Don Orione was very much attached to the papacy, once again along the lines of Don Bosco, but some extracts, like "The Pope is Jesus Christ" (p 63), are too redolent of the "papal cult" launched by Pius IX to be honestly accepted today, especially in our ecumenical age Don Orione had a great attachment to Our Lady he moved heaven and earth to establish a new shrine dedicated to her at Tortona (Sicily), under the title of Our Lady of the Watch Needless to add that the new *beatus*, who eventually became the founder of the little Work of Divine Providence and the Little Missionary Sisters of Charity, had an unbounded trust in God and his grace

E R. HAMBYE, S J

Book Reviews

Moral Theology

Fundamental Moral Theology By Franz Bockle Translated from the German by N D Smith *Dublin, Gill and Macmillan* Pp xii-321 £ 7 95

This is a mature work by one of the pioneers of the recent renewal of Moral Theology Although it makes somewhat difficult reading, its perusal is a rewarding experience The author brings the contributions of modern philosophy, sociology and literature to bear on the fundamental themes of Christian morality He develops a Moral Theology rooted in Scripture and nurtured in authentic Christian tradition, but in dialogue with contemporary thought

There are many today who would minimize the importance of the ethical imperative But the author shows that 'should' is part of everyday language and reveals the common, although often prereflective, awareness of moral obligation Here is a case of professional moralists and pastors disaffected by traditional modes of thinking, but of common sense witnessing to a fundamental human value

The author very well develops the theme of autonomy and shows that God is the ultimate ground of autonomous freedom In these days of tension between the secular and the sacred, he recalls how St Thomas attributed man's particular dignity to his active participation in God's providence so that the autonomous formation of the world is a task entrusted to him by God There is, however, the danger of making it an absolute, of raising one's products into idols This is reflected in the experience of guilt The author shows how turning away from God is in fact also self-alienation and, therefore, a destruction of self and community But when sin is placed before God it is seen as part of the movement of God's promise The human task of shaping the future is beset with inner contradictions But the Christian should not give in to passive resignation but fight against evil through Christ's liberating power.

The author studies the justification of norms thoroughly He traces the development of law from the Old Covenant to Wisdom literature and in the New Testament and shows the decisive importance of the coming of the Kingdom for moral life He particularly stresses the inseparability of Jesus' moral message from his person and activity and the ethos of the early Church above all as call to faith

The present work brings out the primacy of moral values as opposed to moral laws and the complexity of the whole question of natural law But it does not discuss the problem of moral absolutes which is hotly debated today This will come as a surprise to many Another important lacuna is the omission of a treatment of conscience Because of the psychological implications of the matter, says the author, he leaves this to others more competent than he But this excuse is insufficient on two counts First, there can be no exhaustive treatment of Fundamental Moral Theology without a stress on conscience Second, the author has attempted an elaborate exposition of guilt which has even more psychological implications

In spite of these lacunae, this English version of Bockle's most important work to date is to be welcomed Although it does not explicitly treat current issues, it can be a great help in approaching them with a truly Christian vision

G Lobo, S J

Marriage

Marriage, Faith and Love By Jack Dominian *London, Darton, Longman and Todd,* 1981 Pp 279 £ 7 50

This is an updated and combined version of the author's two earlier works, *Christian Marriage* (cf The Clergy Monthly, 1968, p 42) and *Marital Breakdown* (cf The Clergy Monthly, 1969, p 263) It is to be read in the light of another of his works, *Proposals for a New Sexual Ethic* (cf Vidyajyoti, 1978, p 435), although here he seems to be more moderate in departing from traditional positions regarding sexual

morality A special feature of Dominian's writings is the healthy combination of doctrine, concrete sociological findings and long experience in marriage guidance

The author first presents contemporary marriage in the Judeo-Christian background and in the light of its social and psychological reality The latter is directly based on Western experience but could be of considerable use for Eastern countries if it is understood with the necessary modifications Then the author goes on to describe the personal encounter of marriage as sustaining healing, growth, permanence and sexuality With its wealth of insights, this is surely the best part of the book Then the author traces the life cycle of marriage during the stages of courtship, the early years, the middle years and the later years The considerations here are perforce generalizations which must be understood with a good deal of flexibility.

The treatment of marital breakdown is much briefer than in the ealier work on the subject but benefits from D's further experience and the considerations in the previous chapters of the present work He strongly defends the matrimonial jurisprudence of the Catholic Church regarding annulment with its theological justification which he thinks "will have important repurcussions on pastoral work and contribute to the viability of marriage" (p 184)

The last part deals with some specific Christian elements—pastoral care, liturgy, sacramentality of marriage, ecumenical dimension and Christian love He makes many interesting suggestions, for instance, the formation of a new annual liturgical cycle of marriage related to the 4 steps of its life cycle Amidst the widespread feeling that marriage and the family are disintegrating, Dominian ends with an optimistic note "In marriage, and particularly sacramental marriage, God has placed in our hands one of the principal means of developing relationships of love which prepare us for our eternal state" (p 276) This book should help in the realization of this hope

G Lobo, S J

Bioethics

How Brave a New World ? Dilemmas in Bioethics By Richard A Mc Cormick, S J *London, SCM Press*, 1981 Pp. 440 £ 8 50

McCormick is one of the most prominent moral theologians today He has been rendering signal service by his "Notes on Moral Theology" in *Theological Studies* as well as through contributions to numerous periodicals, especially in the fields of General Moral Theology and Bioethics But till recently most of his writings have remained scattered and inacessible to the general reader So it is very fortunate that his collected works are appearing in rapid succession The present volume is of particular interest as it covers most of the hotly discussed issues in Bioethics It comprises 22 chapters and an appendix on "The Principle of the Double Effect", all of which have earlier appeared in other books and journals.

The author is noted for his clarity of thought and expression While he does contribute original insights and formulations, he manifests a remarkable skill in accurately reporting the opinions of other writers, whether he agrees with them or not, so that the spirit of dialogue is fostered Reading the present volume, one can get fairly well acquainted with the main trends of thought in the field today McCormick is quite respectful towards the teaching of the Magisterium but does not hesitate to differ when he is convinced of the contrary by solid arguments He distinguishes between conflict and honest dissent and thinks that well-founded dissent is a contribution to the development of magisterial teaching

In Section I, he discusses general methodological approaches and insists on moral responsibility for health which cannot be treated in isolation from the life-style of a culture He shows that quality-of-life judgments enter deeply into health care decisions and even questions of life and death The next Section tackles the increasingly difficult problems of experimentation in the incompetent

Among the 3 articles in Section 3 on abortion, the most valuable is on "Rules for Abortion Debate" The author laments the emotional tone in which the debate is often conducted He suggests some rules for a more helpful discussion 1) attempt to identify areas of agreement, 2) avoid the use of slogans, 3) represent the opposing position accurately and fairly, 4) distinguish the pairs right-wrong, good-bad, 5) try to identify the core issue at stake, 6) admit doubts, difficulties and weaknesses in one's own position, 7) distinguish the formulation and substance of a moral conviction, 8) distinguish morality and public policy, 9) distinguish

morality and pastoral care or practice, 10) incorporate the woman's perspective

The author is not too clear in what he has to say on p. 194 regarding the status of the human conceptus before implantation. He seems to dismiss too lightly the relevance of 'personhood' for the moral judgment on abortion

Section 4 on contraceptive interventions documents the controversy surrounding *Humanae Vitae* and tackles the vexed question of sterilization in Catholic institutions Considering all the conflicting viewpoints, the author comes to the conclusion that all tubal ligations need not be excluded but any should be done only with great caution and responsibility

Section 5 treats the more recent questions on genetic medicine and reproductive interventions in a balanced way The last Section on preservation of life is dominated by the notion of a 'meaningful life' The author proposes that the distinction reasonable/unreasonable be used instead of the older ordinary/extraordinary Perhaps too much energy has been expended on such alternative formulations which do not seem to differ substantially from the currently established one

The Appendix provides a summary of what the writer has discussed in his work *Doing Evil to Achieve Good* (Chicago, Loyola University Press, 1978) He has been shifting his position progressively on the issue of moral absolutes and the principle of double effect, so that he now totally agrees with Bruno Schuller In the process, his own original contributions on this matter seem to have been lost

All the essays have been left virtually the same as they originally appeared This may reveal some inconsistencies But the author thinks that this is counterbalanced by the advantages of seeing how his thought has evolved Indeed this development gives a glimpse of his openness of mind The volume has been well prepared for publication except for the fact that many authors, including the present reviewer, have been cited in defence of some positions without giving any reference or even mentioning the particular work

G LOBO, S J

Spiritual Exercises

The Ignatian Exercises in the Light St John. By Carlo M. MARTINI, S J *Anand, Gujarat Şahitya Prakash*, 1981, Pp. xvi-246, Rs 27.

"The Spiritual Exercises must be adapted to the condition of the one who is to engage in them, that is, to his education and talent" The present book is a good example that illustrates creatively and with a sense of originality the meaning and scope of Annotation 18 of the *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius The book contains 15 meditations, 7 homilies and 1 instruction, preached by the renowned Biblical scholar to a group of Jesuits in Italy in 1974, in preparation for the thirty-second General Congregation of the Society of Jesus They are offered here in a smooth English translation by Joseph Gill, S J from the original tape-recorded talks that were published in Italian by the Ignatian Centre of Spirituality, Rome

Keeping in mind his audience that consisted of many delegates to the 32nd General Congregation of the Jesuits, the preacher presents the *Spiritual Exercises* in the light of the Gospel of St John, highlighting at the same time the relation between the Gospel and the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus "The basic theme", as he states in the Introduction, "is the harkening to the evangelical message proposed by John, understood as the Gospel of the presbyter" (p xv), that is, to discover the way in which God guided the presbyters of the time of the Apostle John, and to contextualize it in the life of retreatants today through an Ignatian pedagogy of discernment

In the words of Karl Rahner, who contributes a Forewored to the book "This is a book of wisdom, clarity and piety. It is a book for Jesuits which, however, will be of great service to many others, for whom Ignatius with his Spiritual Exercises remains a reliable guide in the following of Jesus and in finding God in all things" (p x)

JOE MATHIAS, S J

Cross-Cultural Communication

Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally. An Introduction to Missionary Communication By David J HESSELGRAVE *Allahabad, St Paul Publications*, 1981 Pp 511. Rs 40.

We are living in an age of communications explosion. Inter-Cultural Communication is a new, but growing science. Taking mission as a process of inter-

cultural communication, the author shows all that a missionary can learn about his work from paying close attention to the various elements of communication theory.

Starting from a model of the communication process as sending a message rom a source to a respondent through the activity of encoding and decoding, the author shows how much culture as context underlies and influences the whole process The process of missionary communication is a complex affair involving three cultures the Biblical culture, the culture of the missionary, and the culture of the object of proclamation He goes on to list seven dimensions of cross-cultural communication World View, Cognitive Processes, Linguistic Forms, Behavioural Patterns, Social Structures, Media Influence, and Motivational Resources Each of these dimensions is then taken up its elements are analysed, the results of relevant studies in the area summarized and presented, problems indicated and illustrated, and constructive suggestions to facilitate communication listed

The material assembled in the book is quite impressive It is a good introduction to all the major studies in the over-lapping area of culture and communication Schematic presentation of the material is an added advantage A rather extensive knowledge of the missionary situation from the communication point of view in Africa, Asia and even Latin America also helps the author not only to focus the problems but also to offer varied examples to illustrate his principles and suggestions

Some reservations that occured to me while reading the book may be listed a tendency to reduce mission to the communication of a message, a tendency to simplify cultural perspectives as when the Hindu world view is characterized as monistic pantheism, too much attention to encoding the message in a new culture and hardly any to decoding the message from the culture of the missionary, a unilateral perspective that does not take into account more modern aspects of evangelization like dialogue and liberation, no in-depth understanding of the implications of the inculturation of the Gospel These remarks point out the limited scope of the book — which may be intentional on the part of the author

Numerous diagrams and charts help clarity A list of commented and selected material for further reading and a list of problems for study and discussion at the end of each part make it an excellent manual This is a good handbook offering rich material for reflection especially for missionaries facing problems of communication

M AMALADOSS, S.J

Inter-religious Dialogue

Religious Experience: Its Unity and Diversity. Edited by Thomas MAMPRA *Bangalore, Dharmaram Publications,* 1981 Pp 217 Rs 30 (soft cover), Rs 40 (hard cover)

This book contains a dozen papers read in a 1979 Seminar on religious experience at the CMI-run Centre for Indian and Inter-Religious Studies in Rome The papers cover a wide variety of areas Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, Chinese religions, and Christianity All are in English except Carlo Martini's interesting analysis of the four Gospels as expressions of four successive experiences of the Christian life, which is written in Italian Not all the papers deal with religious experience directly, some are rather based on the doctrines or ascetical practices of the communities they study The first and the last essays, by J H Walgrave and A Wilder respectively, deal with the relations of faith to religious experience, they will be particularly helpful for theologians in India Walgrave gives an analysis based on St Thomas' theology of "the inner instinct for the inviting God", while Wilder covers the theology of faith experience in recent theological writings For Hinduism we have studies on Shankara (Chethimattam), the Gita (Kadankavil) and Contemporary India (Dhavamony) (how "contemporary" is Ramakrishna ?). Among the other papers that on Hesychasm (Aerthayil) gives a useful summary of the tradition which developed the Jesus Prayer The proof-reading is poor To mention only more important faults in ch 2 footnotes 36 and 37 are fused into one, with the result that the following notes, 37 to 79, are all one digit behind the corresponding note-call, on p 140 the top 4 lines are in inverted position The book may not be the "indispensable guide", claimed by the cover flap, for those who seek unity in the variety of religious experiences, since very little, if anything, is said in it about such unity, but it surely is a useful addition to studies on inter-religious topics

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J

Hindu-Christian?

Conversion and Indian Civil Law By Julian SALDANHA, S J. *Bangalore, Theological Publications in India* 1981 Pp v-245. Rs 20.

The book under review studies the social and legal implications of conversion from Hinduism to Christianity The author shows through his research that a Christian after his conversion can still remain rooted socially and legally in Hindu society Faith in Jesus Christ does not necessarily divorce a convert culturally, socially and legally from the community of his birth The author's research bears mainly on the legal status of a convert from Hinduism to Christianity

Historically, Hindus converted to faith in Jesus Christ have had to make a clean break, socially, culturally and even legally, with the Hindu community De Nobili maintained that converts need not, in principle, change their culture and social status, unless there exist elements that clearly contradict the essence of Christian faith The author's investigation into the legal status of converts shows that there is no need to substitute for the Hindu law a different law for Christians

Saldanha examines the concept of Hindu-Christian' broached by some converts in the early part of the century, and by some missionary theologians in recent times According to them 'Hindu' basically refers to a way of social living rather than to a system of religious beliefs, doctrines and practices Hindu' refers to *samj dharma* Apart from the acceptability or non-acceptability of the term 'Hindu-Christian', we must admit the legitimacy for Christian converts to retain the Hindu personal law and law of succession, just as Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists, and even Muslims in some places, retain either the whole or parts of Hindu law The author's study of this point among the other religions is well-researched and enlightening It points to a possible analogical status of converts from Hinduism to Christianity. The retention of the legal status of converts would prevent the unnecessary disruption of the social fabric of Hindu society However, one must raise here the question of the caste structure of Hindu Society, with its intrinsic link with ritual worship regulated by caste hierarchy and including the worship of caste deities (*kula devata*).

In the present context of inculturation and of the deeper understanding which the post-Vatican II Church has acquired of her evangelizing mission, there is no doubt that the book is an important contribution A study of the Freedom of Religion Bills of Madhya Pradesh and Orissa further adds to its value, as also does a useful chapter on the ticklish problem of discrimination against non-Christians of scheduled castes With TPI's fine get-up and moderate price, the Church in India stands to gain from this entire study

S AROKIASAMY, S J

Indian Islam

Islam in India: Studies and Comments, Vol I Edited by Dr Christian W TROLL. New Delhi, *Vikas Publishing House*, 1982 Pp 231 Rs 95

Islam came to India both with the peaceful Arab merchants and the conquereros in the 8th century A D First the coastal region of Malabar received the Muslim Arab traders who not only established trading centres but also converted local people to their faith peacefully In 712 the Arabs conquered Sind and established their garrisons at the strategic points there But the history of the rise of Islamic cultural centres and the growth of the Muslim population began with the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate in the beginning of the 13th century A D Soon later the destruction of the urban centres in central Asia and Iran by Chengiz Khan and his descendants led to the exodus of people to India The patronage extended by the Delhi Sultans to the men of learning and talents turned the capital city of Delhi into a Centre of Culture In fact, Delhi emerged as the most important Centre of learning and Culture in the eastern part of the Islamic world, for Baghdad Samarqand and Bukhara had been either sucked or denuded of their cultural elite in the wake of Mongol conquests Feeling secure in the congenial atmosphere of Delhi, the Indo-Muslim scholars made singular achievements in various fields, in mysticism, in Islamic jurisprudenee and in science and literature their contribution is of outstanding value Moreover, they attracted disciples from Central Asia and Iran

Notwithstanding the outstanding role played by the Indian Muslims in the history of Islam, the Orientalists of Europe did not consider it worthwhile to study their contribution in any field

for quite a long time. They generally assumed that essential Islam could be best studied through the Arabic literature produced in the countries where Islam originated and where Islamic civilization attained its classical form. Recently, the new generation of Orientalists in *U S A , U K* and Germany have realized the importance of the contribution made by the Indian Muslims to the Islamic heritage The editors and the associate editors of the present volume seem to be interested in the study of Islamic religious thought and movements during medieval as well as modern times The first volume of *Islam in India* is an attempt made in this direction

The present volume is divided into the following three parts of unequal length Part I, The First Jesuit Mission to Akbar, Part II, Studies, Part III, Commentaries

The first part, consisting of two papers contributed by Edward R Hambye and Ebba Koch analyses the importance of the visit payed by the Catholic Christian priests from Goa to the Mughal Court at Akbar's invitation Ebba Koch successfully traces the influence of the Jesuit Mission on the Mughal school of painters, an aspect hitherto neglected by modern Scholars

The second part, comprising six contributions, is quite important in so far as the contributors are well-known scholars writing on interesting themes, such as the *Maktubat* of Yohya Maneri (the leading 14th century Sufi of Bihar), Islamic theology, scholasticism, religious commitments among Muslim students, etc In this part every contributor has drawn the attention of modern scholars to aspects which had escaped the notice of the scholars in the past, thus it opens up new lines for further investigation

As to the third part, it contains commentaries written by eight scholars on modern works, bearing on Islam in India The first four contributions inform us about the translation of the Quran from Arabic into four regional languages, Tamil, Telegu, Kannada and Gujarati. The fifth and sixth contributions are by Dr Christian Troll In the fifth he reviews the writings of three Muslim *ulama* (scholars), explaining the meaning and significance of the term *Din* (faith) in Islam. The readers who are engaged in research on Islam in India will find it useful as it informs them about the differences among the leading Muslim scholars in their approach to and interpretation of Islamic values.

The sixth contribution reviews Jamal Khwaja's work, *Quest for Islam. A Philosopher's Approach*. In it Troll is not only mild in his criticism but becomes panegyrical when dealing with the problems raised by Khwaja in his work, and their relevance to the modern age Here one can take issue with Troll for selecting for comments a work the bulk of which is not based on original sources available in Arabic and Persian Jamal Khwaja has no working knowledge of these languages and, therefore, such a work based as it is on secondary sources, should not be considered for comments in standard journals, magazines or in a volume like the one under review The remaining two contributions simply review the works selected by their authors

In the end it may be stated that the decision taken by the teaching staff of Vidyajyoti Institute to publish a series of volumes on Islam in India is a noble idea The publication of the series will not only add to the existing knowledge about Islam in India but will also create understanding between the followers of different religions They deserve our gratitude

Aligarh Muslim University

I H SIDDIQUI

Israel and the Palestinian Problem

This Year in Jerusalem Israel in Experience By Kenneth CRAGG *London, Darton, Longman and Todd*, 1982 Pp 178 £ 5 95

The recent events in Lebanon, climaxing in the Israeli siege of Beirut and the agreed exodus of the PLO into a number of Arab host countries, have brought once again to the world consciousness the painful persistence of the Israel-Arab problem

K Cragg, formerly assistant Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem, has been living in Palestine/Israel for some twenty-one years between 1939 and 1980, either in sustained residence or intermittent visits He has written extensively on comparative theology, and is recognized as one of the leading Christian experts on Islam.

The present book takes its title from the centuries old aspiration of Jewish Passover keepers. 'Next Year in Jerusalem'. Now that Israel has been, politically constituted for three decades, the prayer seems to be realized, fulfilled And yet, Jerusalem next year, in the next years, is still the open question—

the question which, from within Israeli assurance and Palestinian desperation, the author here explores

The four chapters of the book—Achievement, Tragedy, Paradox, Realization?—are not meant as a continuous narrative but rather as different perspectives on the same story Incidents and personalities that make up the successful and yet tragic story of Israel, recur within these chapters but from the angle indicated in the title of each of them "The fourth aims", as the author puts it in his own inimitable, thought-provoking style, "to draw out the ultimate lesson of a tragic history to be transcended, on the one side, and a myth of innocence to be renounced, on the other, as the hope of a mutuality on the part of both which, given such spiritual realism, might find shape in human neighbourhood politically expressed"

Two features make this well-informed and impartial enquiry unique the author's first-hand acquaintance with the relevant personalities, events and writings on both the Palestinian and the Israeli side, and his ability to sound the existential and theological depths of the Israel-Arab dilemma which is grounded in Zion's paradox The more effectively Israel asserts its sovereignty, the more disquieting becomes the Palestinian minority experience and the sense of resident exile

This Year in Jerusalem succeeds in assessing the elements in what is almost now a "hundred years' war" and in pointing out convincingly "the role of religious conscience in the present impasse", which political analysis persistently ignores We recommend this outstanding book as a model in judicious scholarly theological reflection on one of the major issues of the contemporary political scene

Christian W TROLL, S J

Hunger and Famine

World Hunger The Responsibility of Christian Education By Suzanne C TOTON *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books*, 1982 Pp xiv-210 £ 7 75

One of the hopeful signs of the times is the sensitivity some individuals of the First World have acquired regarding the deeper causes of poverty and hunger in the Third World The present author reveals that, while she was working on the so-called development problem, she gradually became convinced that the Third World was not simply poor but was being made poor, and the First World, and the United States in particular, played a significant role in keeping it poor She became as she narrates, suspicious of the generally accepted analysis of hunger and felt that there had to be some relationship between the structured dependence of the Third World and its hunger When she continued to research the trade, aid and investment policies of the First World, her original insight proved true

In Part I, the author first relates the factors that triggered the food crisis of 1972-75 and what some leading experts in the field believe to be the underlying causes of hunger She herself concludes that hunger is not just a result of overpopulation or overconsumption, but one of the more visible effects of the situation of underdevelopment, for which the past colonial exploitation and the present American economic system are to a large extent responsible She then mentions three theories composition of trade, exchange of unequal labour, and inability to compete with First World products she then explains the mechanism of discrimination through GATT as well as American governmental intervention in the production and export of grain She uncovers the structures of injustice that lie behind different forms of 'aid' What she has to say regarding the machinations of multinationals is common knowledge by now She concludes this part by stating that hunger is a crisis of values that calls for radical change

Part II discusses the public and political responsibilities of Christians in affluent countries After referring to some non-religious perspectives, the author briefly resumes the insights of European 'political theology' and Latin American 'liberation theology' While the first has exposed the public nature of the Christian message, the latter helps in seeing more clearly its liberating dimension She then briefly traces the methodology of liberation theology and gives her own reflections on world hunger She also summarizes the social teaching of the Catholic and Protestant Churches

Part III on Education to Justice uses the insights of Paulo Feire to develop a whole programme of 'education for justice' The author does not hesitate to criticize the role of religion and education in maintaining the status quo and asks for a new system that will pose the problem of world hunger with all its

ramifications and will stimulate action for justice

This work is undoubtedly an important contribution to world justice and liberation It cannot be faulted for not tracing the internal cuases of poverty in backward countries since it was not within its scope and since the author considers the external causes as more important However, it would have been worthwhile to study how the external causes actually work themselves into the internal fabric of poor countries and aggravate the local structures of injustice

Although the work is a sort of guide-book for courses on world hunger, directly meant for use in First World countries, it could also be helpful for education of the affluent sections in poor countries It can, moreover, be an eye-opener for all who sincerely struggle for justice and liberation

The educational porgrammes suggested have been seemingly validated by experience But more effective ones could have been evolved than, for instance, 'getting the facts on the baby food controversy', 'food and clothing drives', or even occasional visits to distressed areas Unless people in affluent, countries are made to realize the sinful situation in which they are living through their complicity in exploiting the poor, and made to see how the machinations of the capitalists and the whole military-industrial complex manipulates them no less than the poor nations, nothing much will change So the conclusions drawn by the author are either too weak or else they are presented too cautiously But the whole work is certainly an important contribution to the bringing about of international justice

G LOBO, S J

Famine Edited by Kevin M CAHILL *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books*, 1982 Pp ix-183 $ 8 95

This collection of articles on the most poignant theme of hunger amidst plenty is based on a multi-disciplinary symposium on the subject The contributions, although of varying depth and merit, cast a lot of light on this major ethical challenge to the Christian conscience in our time The following, introductory remarks of the editor set the tone for the whole work "Today mass death by starvation is rarely due to the vagaries of nature but reflects, rather, human decision Today's famines are man-made, for we have the ability to control short term food deficits" (p 1)

The chapter on the history of famine provides many lessons for today, the most important of these being that the beliefs and value systems of the people have a lot of influence upon the response made to famine Three contributions focus on the shocking reality of famine The one on "Demographic Response to Famine" is competently written It brings out the disturbing fact that today generally famine and rapid population growth perpetuate and feed on one another

The ethical aspects of famine are well discussed under the title "Whose Right to Food ?" Specialists in political-economic, historical, cultural and agricultural fields have all their role to play in both prevention and relief of famine

In the next section on the economics of famine, the only contribution from a developing country, although written in a racy style, suffers from clichés adopted from neo-colonial circles The author accepts too uncritically the so-called international division of labour that would reserve advanced technology to the rich countries He does not seem to see the deep political and economic consequences of such a proposal

The concluding articles on "The Response to Famine" make many concrete and useful suggestions, but their perpective on the whole is simplistic They do not sufficiently take into account the racist and imperialistic forces that are at work in perpetuating the gap between the rich and poor countries neither do they study in depth the deep cleavages and structures of oppression in the poor countries themselves

However, on the whole the book is worth going through It can provide much food for thought and stimulus to action on behalf of the starving millions

G LOBO, S.J

Malabar Church

A Double Regime in the Malabar Church (1663-1716) By Thomas PALLIPURATHKUNNEL. *Alwaye, Pontifical Institute of Theology and Philosophy*, 1982 Pp xi-183

Fr Thomas studies the vicissitudes of the Thomas Christians, who remained Catholic since 1653, between the year when they obtained their first vicar apostolic (1663) and the death of Archbishop John Ribeiro of Cranganore in 1716 He, however, devotes one chapter

of his book to the developments that occured among the Syrian Orthodox (Jacobites) during the same period

As would be expected in a doctorate dissertation (this one was presented to the Faculty of Ecclesiastical History at the Gregorian University), the author builds his argument mostly on unpublished sources Nearly all these sources come from the Propaganda Archives, the Carmelite Generalate Archives, and the Jesuit Historical Archives, all placed in Rome. This is not without limitations Concerning the Padroado jurisdiction in Kerala in those days we may surmise that consultation of the Goa Historical Archives would have been quite rewarding, more even than the National Archives of Lisbon Local documentation from Kerala itself is almost totally absent

To my sense, the two most interesting sections of the book are those dealing with the episcopal rule of the first Malayalee bishop, Alexander Parampil (likely Pazheparampil, or Palliparampil), whose choice was made it must be confessed, under duress Only the pressure from the Dutch power, which forbad any foreign bishop to stay on, obliged the Carmelite apostolic visitor to choose a local priest Another section which I appreciated is that dealing with the story of Archbishop John Ribeiro, the first ruling archbishop of Cranganore since 1659 The restoration of the archbishop's succession and the existence of a well kept up vicariate apostolic created all the conditions of divisiveness and oppression for the Thomas Christians It must be admitted that they paid a heavy price for remaining Catholic, and nobody, either in Rome or in Lisbon, seemed in those days to have realized that the domination of one Church over another is perhaps the worst type of ecclesiastical misrule

I would have appreciated more insights into the life and reactions of the people themselves The Thomas Christians met fairly often what did they say in those meetings? Fr Thomas does mention such meetings and summarizes their proceedings, but perhaps he could have insisted more on them, going beyond the often biased sources he was obliged to use

There is no living history without interpretation, and it is perhaps one of the weaknesses of this work that the period studied is not situated against the background of the general attitude of Rome and the missionary orders towards the Eastern Churches, whether in communion or not with the Roman See

My remarks do not in any way diminish the real value of the author's survey of a difficult period Difficult, I means for the people involved in it in those days, and for the modern historian who must find his way in the labyrinth of facts and personalities Most of the hurdles have been successfully crossed here, and this is no small tribute to the author and the masters who guided him in his research

E R HAMBYE, S J

Catholic Colleges in India

Catholic Colleges in India By J MURICKAN, S J *Mangalore, Xavier Board of Higher Education*, 1981 Pp xii-240 Rs 30

This is the result of a survey carried out in 1980 on the specific functions of Catholic Colleges in India The survey was part of a world-wide study done by the International Federation of Catholic Universities and organized in India by the Xavier Board of Catholic Education Only 40 of the 123 constituent Colleges of the Board are studied here, but care has been taken that they be proportionately representative both of the regional set up and of the types of Colleges that come under the purview of the Board The reasons for making a sample rather than a complete survey (p 15) are not quite convincing, one wonders how statistically significant, for instance, are the answers of bishops, when in fact the opinions recorded involve a very small number The survey is largely in the nature of an opinion poll, telling us what people feel about the Catholic Colleges in India It becomes clear that people within the college set up (e g, principals, teachers, students) have, by and large, a more positive opinion than "knowledgeable persons" who look at them from outside Questions of an objective nature are too few, those, namely, giving significant concrete information, e g, the number of research papers or books published by the staff, or the number of scientific journals a library receives Not a few questions seem to be ambiguously worded, and one suspects that the respondents will have taken them in various meanings The general picture that emerges is that in general Catholic Colleges are good in teaching, poor in research and creativity, average or am-

biguous in inculcating Christian values. One would have to ask if these opinions are true to fact or the result of widespread prejudices one way or the other. Murickan guides us through a wealth of material and helps us to see the significance of the 82 tables that tabulate the answers to nearly 100 questions At times his comments do not seem to emerge from the data themselves, but are the result of his own educational philosophy. The book should help individual colleges to make their own evaluation For, as V V John reminds us in the Foreword, "the unexamined life is not worth living"

G GISPERT SAUCH, S J

Hindi Devotional Literature

Early Hindi Devotional Literature in Current Research. Proceedings of the International Middle Hindi Bhakti Conference (April 1979) Organized by the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven Edited by Winand M CALLEWAERT *New Delhi, Impex India*, 1980 Pp 243 Rs 60

The study of the devotional literature in North India between the 12th and the 17th century A D has often been done in isolation by individual scholars whose primary academic interest is the study of Sanskrit or the modern Hindi language There has been a lack of communication in the field of research on the so-called bhakti literature of North India Further still, a vast field of religious literature written in the Bhasha of the period has remained almost untouched In view of the great need for communication and concerted efforts in this field, a conference was organized by the Department of Oriental Studies of the Louvain University (31st March-1st April, 1979) The purpose was to give an opportunity to scholars working on a section of North Indian devotional literature to exchange information and queries regarding their research Fourteen Scholars (from all over Europe, one from the USA and one from Canada), gathered in Louvain, gave a short survey of the research done during the last five years, described the research currently done, and shared plans for the future Besides the fourteen reports given at the Colloquium, another twenty five were sent by scholars from all over the world. The book under review contains the complete proceedings of the conference It includes all the thirty nine essays by the research scholars, thus giving a fairly comprehensive survey of the work already undertaken The essays are intended mainly for scholars who study the *nirgun* or *sagun* literature with a philological approach. But the historian, the anthropologist, the linguist and the student of religion and art will also find much here of interest to them Research in this field of Bhakti Literature is exciting and important. It is so because of its religious content, as we stand here on the tangent between Hinduism and Islam, but it is also so from the linguistic and philological point of view In this study one is faced with languages in full development and continuous interaction Besides publishing all the essays, the volume also contains a discussion by two or three scholars on each of the topics discussed The book will be extremely useful for those involved in philological, historical, anthropological, linguistic, philosophical, religious and art study of 12th to 17th century India

J KERKETTA, S J

Anglicanism

Grow or Die Eassays on Church Growth to Mark the 900th Anniversary of Winchester Cathedral Edited by Alexander WEDDERSPOON *London SPCK*, 1981 Pp ix 141 £ 3,95

Winchester Cathedral, with its famous home for the aged and its even more famous public school, is the Cathedral where the marriage between Queen Mary Tudor and Philip I of Spain took place This attempt at reconciling England with the rest of Christendom failed miserably But the Cathedral still stands as a symbol of what England could have become, or of what it is called to be tomorrow. Though still a powerful body, the Church of England, as many other Western Churches, suffers today from dechristianization, it is estimated that barely 8% of its members attend Church services regularly

Yet, as the seven contributions to this symposium well show, there are definite signs of a slow but steady spiritual recovery in the rank and file of Anglicans Even the Presbyterian Church of Scotland seems also on the way up, though perhaps it had never reached such a low state of affairs as did her sister, the Church of England

One could not expect this memorial symposium to go into a scientific analysis of religiosity and its effects in

Continued on p. 508. See also p. 510

Cum permissu superiorum

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IN MEMORIAM

Fr Prudent De Letter died in the Kodarma hos[illegible]24th September, after a painful illness His name is familiar to our readers as he was assistant editor to THE CLERGY MONTHLY for over thirty years (1940-1971). An imposing number of articles and notes, recollections and answers to queries, and innumerable book-reviews have been signed by him in our review

Fr De Letter was born in Flanders, Belgium, in 1904 and joined the Society of Jesus in 1923. He came to India in 1936, having completed his doctorate in theology at the Gregorian University, Rome. He soon joined the theological faculty of St Mary's College, Kurseong, where he taught systematic theology for thirty-four years (1937-1971). He was also rector of the college for a period of nine years.

Fr De Letter's apostolic activities extended far beyond his teaching and his regular contributions to THE CLERGY MONTHLY His academic output includes the publication of three books, to which must be added many scholarly articles in international reviews, encyclopedias and dictionaries. He also devoted much of his time to pastoral duties and conducted many retreats, triduums and recollections for priests and religious communities. Discontinuing his teaching career in 1971, he spent the last ten years of his active life in pastoral work, spreading the doctrine of the Second Vatican Council in which he saw a promise of deep renewal for the Church.

The service of the Church sums up Fr De Letter's entire life and he has deserved well of her. By all those who have known him either personally or through his writings he will be remembered with gratitude.

Cast Discrimination

A Challenge to the Christian Conscience in India

Jose KANANAIKIL, S J

EQUALITY of all men is one of the basic tenets of Christianity The Hindu caste system, on the other hand, assumes that men are born into different castes which are hierarchically divided into high and low Even today the orthodox Hindus believe that a certain section of people are born 'Untouchables' Christianity has existed in India for nearly twenty centuries However, Christians do not seem to have seriously faced the fact of caste discrimination in India or caste practices within their own community. This paper examines the phenomenon of caste and caste discrimination in India and asks some basic questions as to how Christian leaders have tried to tackle the problem of caste among Christians.

Class, Caste and Tribe

"Caste" as a form of social stratification differs from "class". "Class" implies the formation, within a society, of more or less separate socio-economic and status groups. Thus we distinguish people as belonging to the upper class, the middle class, the lower class, etc The members of a class tend to become exclusive by defining the boundaries of their group, their rights and privileges, and by trying to keep other groups, especially the lower groups, from coming in contact with them and from gaining access to the scarce resources controlled by them However, in principle it is possible for individuals of a lower class to climb up the social ladder. Those individuals who, either through hard work or through chance, gain access to scarce resources, and begin to claim a higher social status than the one they till then enjoyed, are usually assimilated to a higher class according to the strength of their claim

This kind of class formation can be seen in every society. In modern societies this class formation often takes place on the basis of occupation. Examples of such formations in India would be workers' unions, teachers' unions and, to a lesser degree, associations of agricultural labourers in which people belonging to different castes,

tribes and religions come together to bargain for their rights on the basis of their common economic interests

"Caste", on the other hand, refers to distinct social groups, members of which belong to their respective groups by birth Caste groups can be distinguished as horizontal caste groups and vertical caste groups. Horizontal caste groups are sub-castes of more or less equal status and usually of the same stalk but among whom inter-dining and inter-marriage are prohibited Vertical caste groups are those castes which are hierarchically ranked as high and low and among whom inter-dining and inter-marriage are also prohibited.

The fact that the basic line of separation between different caste groups is their being born in that caste makes movement of individuals from one caste to another extremely difficult There are, however, some instances in which one or other caste group as a whole has succeeded in its attempt to raise its status in the caste hierarchy The birth criterion for caste identification also suggests that the process of caste formation in Indian society cannot be reduced to the dynamics of class formation which is based primarily on economic factors The co-existence of distinct economic statuses with different caste groups does suggest, however, that economics has played an important role in determining their place in the caste hierarchy

On the other hand, the birth criterion for membership in the caste indicates the strong ethnic base of caste formation For a proper understanding of the caste system in India, one has to take into account both the economic and ethnic factors It is possible that at the source of what is known as the caste system were distinct ethnic groups competing among themselves for the control of the scarce resources in society. The presence of a political power encompassing many such groups in which some groups controlled the economic resources, and hence the reins of power, might have resulted in the rise of a social order with hierarchically arranged social statuses and roles with their eventual legal and religious legitimation.

While talking about caste and class, one cannot leave out the "tribe". As in the case of caste groups, tribal groups also prohibit inter-dining and inter-marriage with other tribes. Membership in a tribe is also determined by one's being born in that tribe. However, tribal groups do not observe the hierarchical distinction of "high" and "low" as caste groups do. Caste and tribe are thus similar in so far as both have a strong ethnic basis. They differ, however, in so far as the caste system is based on the hierarchy of status and roles, while the tribes have an equalitarian value system. The major reason for

this difference could be that while the caste groups existed under a common political system in which a few controlled power and determined each group's status and role, the tribal groups enjoyed a more or less independent political status. A historical survey of Indian society will show that whenever and to the extent that tribal groups were assimilated to wider political systems controlled by the dominant group or groups, they lost their equalitarian basis and were forced to take their place somewhere in the caste hierarchy.

Thus three different forms of social organisation have existed in India for a long time, the hierarchically arranged caste groups, the equalitarian tribal societies and the class groups based mainly on economic power, social prestige and political influence The existence of these three distinct social organisations in India has not received sufficient attention and comparative analysis from the part of sociologists.

The Predominance of Caste

Among these three forms of social organisation found in India, the caste-based organisation is the predominant one Tribal societies are restricted to certain areas and their influence on the rest of India is very limited. Class-based social organisation is very weak in India and wherever it has taken root, it is very much influenced by caste factors.

The caste based organisation pervades nearly the whole of Indian society It is important to distinguish two elements, when we discuss caste: Caste as a form of social organisation and caste as a form of exploitative structure, which becomes a manipulative means in the hands of those who have power. All societies in the world have manifested a tendency to form basic social units, sometimes based on ethnicity and race, sometimes based on religion, region or language. Just as the family as a basic unit in society serves the purpose of helping individuals to meaningfully relate themselves to significant others, so also basic social units help people to organise their lives better. These forms of social identities would seem to be an essential requirement of any healthy society and perhaps would continue as long as human beings are able to associate freely in society.

At the same time we also see in every society a tendency for those who happen to possess power to manipulate other groups. This seems to have happened in a very acute way in India. Social groups based on ethnicity, religion and region became hierarchically ordered, those controlling power assuming the first rank and the highest status in society. Those who were not able to compete for their rights,

had to accept a lower social status and occupation. A significant part of Indian society was relegated to the status of "Untouchables". It is this exploitative nature of the caste-based social order that has done so much harm to Indian society. After thirty five years of independence and secular democracy and developmental programmes, we do not seem to have succeeded in bringing about any significant change in this situation.

Caste and Christianity

Christianity came to India in different stages. The earliest Christian converts in India were the St Thomas Christians of Kerala. It is difficult to say how widespread the practice of caste discrimination was when Christianity first came to India But for all practical purposes the Christian community in Kerala, and along the West coast, became distinct groups and gradually became sub-divided among themselves When the Latin Christians appeared on the scene, caste based practices seem to have become more evident, the Syrian Christians considering themselves to be superior to the Latin Christians and refusing to enter into marriage alliances with them, In other parts of India, the spread of Christianity took two basic forms The theory of fusion from above was popular for some time According to this theory, it was believed that converts from upper castes would spread Christian faith downward to the lower caste groups The influence of the upper caste people on the lower castes was taken for granted. Conversions from the lower castes were often discouraged thinking that too many lower caste converts might become an obstacle to upper castes becoming Christians

This theory was later given up by most. The conversion movement among the lower castes, especially among the "Untouchables", became a widespread phenomenon, although some Christian groups were unable to cope with the influx of large numbers of converts without sufficient preparation

In both these approaches, however, the major concern was to spread the faith The existence of caste and caste discrimination was not given serious attention As a consequence, the upper caste converts to Christianity continued their caste practices against other Christians and the lower caste Christians brought with them separate social habits and continued discriminatory practices against each other. It is important to note, however, that caste practices in Christianity are not strictly comparable with caste practices among Hindus. First of all, caste practices in Christianity are not legitimized by religion. They are based more on social status and economic

power and social customs prevalent in society. These practices are not integrated into religious beliefs or legitimized by religious norms.

The caste practices found in Christianity are of milder form and intensity than those found in Hinduism. Even among Christians the intensity of caste practices differs substantially. Caste practices will be found more among groups which are different economically and in social status. For example, one notices intense forms of caste practices among converts from upper castes against converts from lower castes, especially from the "Untouchable" communities. In the same way the Syrian Christians in Kerala, especially those of upper social status, discriminate against Latin Christians, especially those who are recent converts and coming from economically lower classes such as the fishermen Even here caste is not practised as a strict norm Whenever economically feasible or socially adjustable, these Christians enter into marriage alliances. Inter-dining is not considered as socially forbidden

Caste in the Church: A Sociological Reflection

From a sociological point of view, it is not surprising that caste practices have entered Christian communities in India It would have been inexplicable, if social practices and customs prevalent in the wider society did not affect the Christian community. What is surprising, however, is the fact that, for nearly twenty centuries, Christians in India have been able to tolerate caste practices among themselves, without serious conflict with their faith One of the basic tenets of Christianity is the equality of all men All are children of God and therefore equal in the sight of God This basic belief should have sooner or later forced the Christian conscience to reflect upon the social practices prevalent in society of which they themselves became victims. This, surprisingly, did not take place Christians were able to live their faith-life separately from their social life. Christian life became compartmentalized into two dimensions, without one affecting the other.

This compartmentalization of Christian life is not a unique occurence in India. For centuries, Christianity was able to accommodate the existence of slavery. Discrimination against ethnic groups who are socially and economically inferior, has existed in many countries One can give examples of the treatment meted out to the Negroes in South Africa, to the Blacks in the United States and to the Catholics in Northern Ireland. In all these cases, one finds the basic inability of Christians to reflect upon their social surroundings in the context

of their faith and to transform social conditions according to the dictates of their religious convictions.

In India a number of factors contributed to perpetuate the separation between religious faith and social practices It is true that Christians in India constitute a tiny minority (2.6% according to the 1971 census). However, Christians in India constitute a very enlightened community. As a community, Christians are highly educated and well organised. Their religious leaders are highly educated and trained in religious matters. They conduct a number of social and educational institutions in the country, in which they can take legitimate pride. Inspite of this awareness and higher educational level, Christians in India as a whole have not been able to integrate their religious faith and social life.

One of the reasons for this incapacity to reflect upon the contradictions existing between their religious faith and social practices is the fact that the vast majority of those who are responsible for the management of the Church institutions and those who are in authority came from the "Upper Castes". This situation facilitated the continuation of un-Christian practices which were introduced into Christianity unconsciously Christians who came from the lower strata either accepted their social status in the Church or were unable to raise their voice within the Church. There are enough indications to show that Christian converts from lower castes were conscious of the discriminatory practices against them by socially well-to-do upper caste Christians. During the visit of the Simon Commission in the 1920's, for example, a number of Christian groups complained to the Commission about the discriminatory practices meted out to them in their own communities. This was especially the case in Tamil Nadu.

A second reason for the development of the dichotonomy between faith-life and social life in the Church came from the social teaching of the Church Roughly from the time of the Council of Trent to the encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, the social teaching of the Church remained in limbo. The social concern of the Church did not diminish but it was expressed solely through humanitarian activities such as educational institutions, hospitals and orphanages. A tremendous social upheaval was taking place in the world The emergence of nation-states, the industrial revolution and urbanisation opened up new vistas for human action in social spheres. It was the genius of Karl Marx who pointed out this tremendous new opening for human development through the study of society and through organized social action

In all this the Church remained a stranger. Its concern to keep religious institutions uncontaminated from worldly concerns took the

form of separation between Church and State and limiting the concern of the Church to strictly religious matters. The need for social analysis and understanding social structures in order to re-construct society was not deeply felt in the Church. Faith could be lived detached from the social context. This dichotomy between the religious and secular spheres affected the Church's ability to involve itself in the human problems in a changing human society. We are still suffering from this orientation the Church took centuries ago. The existence of caste discrimination in the Church in India is a reflection of this.

From a sociological point of view, as noted earlier, caste practices in the Church are a normal phenomenon. They indicate that the Church as a social institution, follows the rules of the society in which it exists. We also found that the caste practices in the Church are not strictly comparable to caste practices in Hindu society. Caste practices in the Church exist more on the economic and social levels than on the level of religious norms and beliefs The strong equalitarian teaching of the Church has influenced social thinking in Indian society. This suggests that Christianity has in some way been influencial in weakening the basis for legitimization of caste discrimination, if not the practice of discrimination itself

What requires serious reflection from the part of Christians in India is not the presence of caste practices in the Church but the fact that the Christians in India have, for so long, been able to accommodate caste practices within the Church and in the wider society, without serious conflict with their religious convictions and the prevalent social practices in Indian society Christian religious leaders have so far not found it necessary to take a definite stand on caste practices within the Church Recently, however, the conversion of some Scheduled Caste groups to Islam and Buddhism and the public statements by some of these converts and some Christians themselves who were converts from scheduled castes, highlighting caste practices in the Church, even in the selection of candidates for priesthood, have forced the Bishops of India to make a statement disowning caste practices in the Church [1] Other than this verbal stand, the bishops have not found it necessary to initiate any concrete pastoral programme to root out the evil practice of caste discrimination within the Church. There are numerous Christian seminaries and theological centres in India, but none of them, to judge from available literature and information, has taken up the challenge of caste discrimination in Indian society and within the Christian community itself, as a serious matter for theological reflection and action. The absence of serious theological

1. See VIDYAJYOTI, March 1982, pp 148-150.

reflection and of social analysis has resulted in the Church blindly imitating the prevalent value systems in society without subjecting them to the test of the Gospel.

This state of affairs, while justifiable as a social phenomenon, raises serious doubts about the capacity of religion, in this context of Christianity, to transform society. To what extent can or do Christian principles, or Christian ideology, if there is such a thing, pose as a challenge to Christians, let alone others, to question the existing social structures and social practices and to rebuild a society that is more human, more "Christian" ? History, both in India and outside, seems to suggest that religion, in general, follows changes in society rather than initiates social change. Often religion has served to justify and legitimize existing social structures and social practices rather than question them Without calling into question the legitimacy or independence of the religious realm, one can unhesitatingly say that religious institutions and religious doctrines have been, for the most part, creations and interpretations by the socially influential groups to suit their needs and to justify their deeds Revolutionary ideas of social justice have often been interpreted to suit certain sections of the people, the most influential ones This only shows how human religious institutions are, and how socially bound the actions of religious leaders are.

This is the genuine human situation in which we all live Religious ideals, however lofty they are, have to function within the social context And it requires great discipline and presence of mind to assure that religious ideals become a means to guide social life and not a means in the hands of powerful elements in society to perpetuate existing unjust structures. The phenomenon of caste discrimination in the Church in India, and the Christian conscience in India which apparently has christened caste without feeling its contradiction, should awaken every Christian to the reality that a religion which is not continually self-critical will sooner or later end up being its own enemy, justifying and legitimizing the very unjust social structures it seeks to transform.

Francis of Assisi—A Modern Prophet

Joy PRAKASH, OFM

SAINT Francis of Assisi is one of those people who have a perennial attraction for men and women of all times—a 'man for all persons', one might say. Though a distant historical figure, he emerges as attractive and as challenging for the 20th century as he was for the 13th century. This poor little man who is at once child and poet, as well as prophet and man of God, saintly and immensely human, introduced something incongruous, fundamental and ultimately 'dangerous'. We want to point out those elements of his life, at least a few, that make continuing demands on our contemporary questions of life.

There are evident signs in our world and culture of the thirst for meaning and a sense of the Transcendent; there is the credibility of Christ and his Church at stake in the context of social compassion, humanism, Marxism, anti-clericalism and institutionalism; there is the impact of materialism that promotes consumerism and keeps the poor condemned to Dives' door; there is the ever-growing fear that the physical universe of God's creation may witness a near extinction, and there is the sorely needed message for our times: peace and unity.

God and the Meaning of Life

Francis has gone down in history as a saint whose whole personality is our guarantee that God can be known and experienced. In other words, this medieval man also lived, in his own way, the search for the obscure face of God In his unceasing search for God, he felt, as it were, that his personal destiny and life were bound up with God. He made no pretensions to divinity. A simple faith spurred by action, with no analytical intelligence, he believed that God can redeem us from our anxiety, lack of meaning and restlessness. With no fog of words, formulas and rationalizations or dissipation, what indeed remained a radical experience of his authentic creaturehood, he lived deeply In this concrete reality of his creaturehood he experienced the goodness of God. And in his creature-Creator relationship the only worthwhile thing in the world he could do was to keep himself before God in an attitude of thanksgiving and praise.

From his last retreat on La Verna he returned marked with the five wounds of Christ. It is hard to contemplate that spiritual wrestling Our own century produces some figures in many ways similar and curiously comparable, with the big difference that Francis 'loved God' That is where Francis invites the hardest questions for those who are capable of posing them. In his portrait of St Francis done with the strictest fidelity to the testimony of the first witnesses and historical documents, Fr N. G. Van Doornik says:

> The figure of Francis, as he experiences the presence of God, represents a problem to the non-believer. Francis cannot be anything but the victim of an illusion He speaks to nothingness, he labours for a hallucination If he finds here the strength for a life of service — and no one will deny that he does — it is in a non-existent dimension, eternal perhaps and founded in charity, but no more substantial than air Thus the non-believer does not shrink from explaining the experience of Francis on La Verna An emaciated ascetic, product of a cultural background full of mystical symbols, spends weeks in isolation high on a mountain Such a man cannot but live in a fantastic dream world And if his dream hero is a god, then this god will speak to him, as he spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai

He goes further to say:

> If one believes that on La Verna Francis underwent the most exalted mystical experience imaginable, he will readily accept that what happened there was *more than a clinical phenomenon In this atmosphere of ecstatic love, the* total synthesis of mind and body, the phenomenon of the stigmata has become a symbol of Francis' likeness to his Master For his followers, it was tangible proof that God, on La Verna, had accepted this man and with him his order The Church has given this event a special place in the liturgy [1]

Today the question of faith and of God is raised in different terms and in a more radical way. Francis' experience must serve, if not as a model, at least as a calling and a question for us.

Christ and His Church

The goodness and love of God became manifest entirely for Francis in the incarnation and redemption. Throughout his life he wished to know nothing more than that: Christ poor and crucified. The humility of the incarnation and the love expressed in Christ's passion so occupied his thoughts that he wished to think of nothing else. No other explanation can be given for his practice of such rigorous poverty, his sincere charity amidst the most trying contradictions, his generous and tender charity, his travels to evangelize the infidels and his submission to a Church that evoked so many disparaging condemnations from people who sought to reform it. The mystery

1. Van Doornik, N C., *Francis of Assisi*, Franciscan Herald Press, 1977, p 181.

of Christ, namely, the cross that followed the Saviour from crib to Calvary, so impregnated him that it stamped his piety with a distinctive character of familiar *intimacy* with Christ.

To the churchmen and laity who were caught up in this-worldly affairs Francis had no theory to offer, no protest to hurl against, no verbal criticism, threats or violent gestures toward the Church or toward the society but he lived within it the purity and freedom of the Gospel He lived the old practice — the practice of Jesus Christ. After Francis no one ever took Jesus with such stubborn literalness — or to such stunning effect.

It might appear paradoxical but the most effective means of protest for the Christian community in India would be to live the Gospel calling seriously If we respond to the Gospel challenges day after day we become in the long run a public menace. The adventure we live in the name of the Gospel would disturb and shake up not only other believers but the Church as well, whose mission it is to promote such adventures What takes place, then, would be a living reproach to mediocrity and establishment

For Francis the Gospel meant neither texts nor morality, sublime or altruistic as they may be, but a face — the face of the risen Jesus who reveals God He is the very enfleshment of the words of Pope Paul VI in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*.

> Take a Christian or a handful of Christians who, in the midst of their own community, show their capacity for understanding and acceptance, their sharing of life and destiny with other people, their solidarity with the efforts of all for whatever is noble and good Let us suppose that, in addition, they radiate in an altogether simple and unaffected way their faith in values that go beyond current values, and their hope in something that is not seen and that one would not dare to imagine Through this wordless witness these Christians stir up irresistible questions in the hearts of those who see how they live. Why are they like this ? Why do they live in this way ? What or who is it that inspires them ? Why are they in our midst ? Such a witness is already a silent proclamation of the Good News and a very powerful and effective one (n. 21)

Materialism and Consumerism

Francis knew his society through having lived in its midst and even attempted to climb the social ladder of his day. In his upbringing and mentality he was a bourgeois and aspired to have more than the riches of his father: he desired the honour, adventure and refinement of knighthood Francis broke with his father and therefore with the materialistic outlook of his time, the Church included. He challenged his father's materialism (and ours) He realised that nothing would free

his spirit, nothing would reconcile humanity with itself and its true nature except an attitude of dispossession. Francis faced the loneliness of bourgeois existence, where even the presence of God frequently disappears; he faced it in the right way.

It is true that the modern day Indian does not live in a self-built world surrounded by its products, consumer goods, cosmetics of all sorts and apartment of Hollywood-style, as the Westerners do, but there is certainly this trend among the newly rich — to imitate the West Any trade or skill that will spin fast money either at home or abroad is sought and followed. And when it comes to the needs of man we only have to think of Gandhiji's proverbial analogy that the desire for a cow gives rise to the subsequent desire for a milkman to look after it, and so on And ultimately we create more and more needs for which only the rich can afford to pay, and the poor remain without the basic amenities.

In such a money-and-production-oriented society, man inevitably loses his natural ability to stand in silent admiration and merely be present among people and things, without wanting to use, over-use, consume or possess them Along with the gift of admiration, he also loses his reverence and respect for the mystery of life Life loses its sublimity when the commodities of life become idols to be sought after This gives rise to domination over fellow beings, manipulation, retaliation, devaluation of life and competition The consumer attitude gives rise to inflation which really affects the poor in every way.

The idea is not to denigrate our times or to hold up as shining example the middle ages. But are there not fundamental values that are debased today ? In the midst of too much materialism and consumerism, does not man lose his identity and fall victim to anxiety ? Does not the possession of wealth influence relationships between men and widen the gulf between the haves and the have-nots ? Doesn't materialism stop with the present, the mundane, and fail to push us forward to the other and God ?

Leaving the oppressive atmosphere of his father's trade unleashed in Francis a new space: "Now I can say indeed, Our Father who art in Heaven" Thus two completely contradictory worlds collided — the world of property, anxiety and violence and the world of poverty, freedom and peace.

Social Compassion

Faced with an imperfect world Francis did not devise a programme or apply for a grant; he did not make war on poverty or talk about com-

munity or sharing. He lived the Gospel. If the Son of God did not esteem the equality he had with the Godhead and took up our poor humanity, how could Francis ever claim wealth and power and position ? Hence he *chose* to be poor ! He was not trapped into it by greed or injustice as most people in India are. He was content to do without a lot of things. But the people in India are fighting to escape a poverty that arises from a lack of understanding of human fellowship.

Francis understood that a certain political structure or economic system increases the affluence of a majority or minority. But there will always be despised persons, out-laws of society. His solution was a decision to live with the poor to the point of identification with them. That alone, in his mind, abolishes social distances. Every political and economic set-up creates classes. The great equalizer is personal proximity with the heart.

By embracing the leper, it was Francis who received. The leper gave him the opportunity to rise above his aversion, to become more human through him. Up to then, the poor of the earth had been kept in their place. Francis through identification with them experienced such depths of desperation and shame. So gone is the old picture of the condescending benefactor and the imploring suppliant. They are now on the same footing, for giving and receiving represent an exchange of courtesies between two people who know that God bestowed his abundant creation upon all mankind.

Whatever our world may think of the poverty ideal of the little poor man of Assisi, here is his answer to the pressing current problem of our world (especially India desparately needs a solution): giver and receiver, rich and poor, should see each other as equals, as brothers and sisters before God. The receiver is no longer the object of the other's charity. And the giver no longer clings unconsciously to the gift, which he somehow *still* feels to be his. Acquired possessions regain their original luster as "gifts of God to mankind". In fact through a gesture of compassionate attitude towards all, Francis returned to those primitive days when the good earth was here for everyone. As many as five times his early biographer Thomas of Celano tells how, in the dead of winter, Francis gave his cloak to a beggar, with a few words which were touching in their sincerity: "Brother", he once replied, when a companion remarked on Francis' own needs, "I would be stealing if I did not give to one poorer than myself." This is indeed radical equality.

Though Jesus all through his ministry did not make the social problem a central issue, and offered no plan for social reform, he declared the love of God and of man to be the very basis of a wholesome human life. Contrary to the Marxist tenet, we understand that the problem is not economic but moral: and it is spritual ideals that make life worth living Francis knew intuitively what his age so desperately needed. He gave the poor a new status, made work respectable, and raised the leper above himself, as a symbol of the suffering Christ, touching the very foundations of medieval life like a premature Karl Marx But Francis was a revolutionary without a "bloody banner raised on high".

Peace and Ecumenism

At a present-day peace Conference, Francis would probably not be allowed to speak, even if he should ask to do so Yet he becomes a formidable man of peace when one begins to search for the fundamental basis on which world peace must be built. Unlike Dr Martin Luther King, Jr. or Adolfo Perez Esquivel who used the public platform provided them to witness to the Gospel, Francis did not use a platform, did not work out a strategy or plan. Francis' peace is first and foremost an inner quality. When Francis works for peace he does not stop to inquire about the cause of the argument, nor who is right and who is wrong. He goes out from the formidable principle, "You are brethren" (Mat 23:8).

An archdeacon and theology student who listened to Francis preach in Bologna where the patricians of the city were again divided by petty squabbles, recounted the following incident

> I studied in this city, and had the occasion to listen to one of Francis' sermons in the Square of the Little Palaces Almost the whole population of the city was present The sermon lacked the tenor and the presentation of an orator It was no more than a simple call to expel the feelings of hate and malice, and to restore peace The speaker was poorly clad, slight and unassuming. And yet, with his simple words, he succeeded in reconciling the nobility, men who had been at each other's throats for years The enthusiasm was so overwhelming that men and women rushed up to him, tore off pieces of his clothing and carried them away [2]

Though Francis' mission to bring peace between the Crusaders and the Muslims drastically failed, for the first time the Gospel and the Koran did not meet as adversaries.

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2 The text by THOMAS OF SPOLETO can be found in H BOEHMER, *Analekten zur Geschichte des H Franziskus von Assisi*, 2nd edition, Tubingen, 1930, p 16. Thomas says that the sermon was given in the year of the earthquake in Brescia (Christmas, 1222). This story is also recounted in Fioretti 27, *Omnibus of Sources*, pp 1367-1370.

There can be as many summit meetings of the world powers as you like, on Strategic Arms Limitations Talk, and Nuclear non-prolific curbings, and embargo on arms sale; but if there isn't the basic acceptance of the fact that "we are all brethren", it will be utterly impossible for people to hammer their swords into ploughshares, their spears into sickles.

With the Protestant Brethren, the Anglicans, Lutherans and Episcopalians taking to Franciscan ideals, one wonders if Franciscanism is not the natural bridge between Protestantism and Catholicism

Fr Samuel Rayan, in his study of Christian dialogue with Hinduism, takes as his starting point the concrete experiment of Sadhu Ittiyavirah. After analysing the Sadhu's personal life, he exposes the inner content of the Sadhu's threefold apostolate: prayer, presence and word (spoken or written). Concluding his reflections on Hindu-Christian Meeting-Point, Samuel Rayan writes:

> At several points Sadhu Ittiyavirah's work is reminiscent of the original Franciscan Movement. I have always felt that ultimately it will be in the language of St Francis, his language of love, freedom and song, in the language of renouncement and of the wounds of Christ and of contemplation, in hymns to Brother Sun and Sister Death, that Christianity and Hinduism can meet in real dialogue, and in truth give themselves to each other [3]

There we touch Francis' Indian and Asiatic appeal and relevance, and what he would mean in our many attempts towards an Hindu-Christian dialogue.

Ecology

As the quality of life is threatened from all sides, there is the impending danger of the earth itself becoming extinct due to a thoughtless and selfish manipulation of God's world. In proclaiming St Francis Patron of the Environment, Pope John Paul II did something of incalculable importance for the future of our planet. If we take it seriously and act on it, we will be helping to build a future that is worth building and at the same time honouring God the Father of us all.

The man who preached to the birds, and tamed a marauding wolf may easily have a contemporary appeal among the advocates of "Back to Nature" and the "Society for the Protection of Wildlife". But this saint of creation or brother of the universe saw more than what the modern ecologists and environmentologists see. Their concern ends with ecological balance, but Francis saw creation fresh from the Creator's hand.

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3 RAYAN, Samuel, "Dialogue with Hinduism", in *Modern Mission Dialogue*, edited by Jan KERKHOFS, Ecclesia Press, Ireland, 1969, p. 44.

When Francis surrendered himself and dared everything for love's sake, the earth became his home and all creatures his brothers and sisters. That led him to love and respect the world around him and in him and made him a truly humble and unselfish man To make this surrender now will bring us to reverence and respect the environment and to give selfless guidance to nature as it goes on working in and through us.

Once he entrusted himself to God's Fatherhood he understood his fellowship with all creatures. In the great family of creatures he met all beings with trust, sensitivity and respect. He had an affinity with them: brother and sister. All his life he fought against the desire for possessions. One does not possess one's brothers and sisters. Foreign to him was to be the master over creation, the dream of our technocratic era, but he penetrated the secrets of matter far more deeply than the nuclear scientist He had an unimaginably deep sense of God's immanent presence in his creation.

Conclusion

In the final analysis only a man like this, at the crossroads of political, social and economic history, is capable of changing the world Everything belonged to Francis the moment he gave up everything. The Umbrian hills became his home, the fish and the birds his brothers and sisters, the woods and trees and flowers a gift of God. And there was no living soul whose class or status placed him beneath Francis His was the lowest caste, friar minor, little brother; and the only people he could see were those above him. No one ever hit out so powerfully, so radically, at the hard core of the passion for possessions, and the misery caused by usury, exploitation, corruption and all other forms of injustice.

All this goes to show what it means to encounter, know and experience God in Christ. Seeing God at the heart of his Gospel project and attending to the Gospel message with utter seriousness, all that we see is that Francis took Jesus with such seriousness and literalness. Yet he does not condemn any one but challenges us simply by the way he lived. Thus he becomes a man profoundly concerned with peace among men, passionately dedicated to the fraternity of the rich and poor, totally compassionate to the suffering of the dispossessed of the earth, profoundly reverential toward the beauty of this earth. All these facets of his life find familiar resonance in the strivings of sensitive persons today, who are concerned about the quality of life on our planet — the Mother Earth.

This man who started with himself, not expecting others to follow — but follow him they have done for centuries to this very day — bids us, you and me and people everywhere, to love limitlessly a God who first loved us.

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when the great event "Christ is arisen" was proclaimed to them.

The book is divided into two great sections called, I do not know why, "volumes" The first contains a description of the liturgical vicissitudes to which the Syro-Malabar Church was submitted, often to the degree of total loss of liturgical sense, whether eastern or western Then the author with a great deal of biblical and theological knowledge gives a detailed commentary of all the offices, first the vespers of Holy Saturday night (being the "expectation" of the Easter celebration), followed by the night and morning offices of the same day. Then we have the description and commentary of the whole office of the Resurrection, the celebration of the Pascal Mystery It is centred, as could be expected from the deep biblical roots of that liturgy, on the apparition of Christ to the apostles on Easter Sunday evening: "Peace be to you". The commentary concludes with appropriate suggestions for a restoration-cum-adaptation of those offices to the present conditions of the Syro-Malabar liturgy

This liturgy is in process of renewal, and one can only rejoice that it is so But, it looks all the same almost incredible that 20 years after the opening of Vatican II the Syro-Malabar Church still does not have the offices of Holy Week and Easter. This says much about the damaging effects of whole-sale latinisation and pietistic influences.

The second section is a complete translation of all the texts so far commented upon. The author must be praised for having for the first time done such a work. In many ways it will help to render into the vernacular those splendid and inspiring texts

E R Hambye, S J.

Prayer with the Harp of the Spirit. Vol. II: The Crown of the Year Part I Seasons of the Annunciation of the Mother of God, Nativity of our Lord, his Baptism and Epiphany. By Francis Acharya. *Vagamon, Kurisumala Ashram*, 1982. Pp. xxix-634.

Already two years ago, Fr Francis Acharya, the superior of the Kurisumala Ashram, Kerala, made a remarkable contribution to the liturgical literature of the Indo-Eastern tradition of Christianity. He published Vol I of the "Prayer with the Harp of the Spirit" which, with adaptations to the Indian context, corresponded to the weekly cycle of liturgical offices of the West-Syrian tradition as practised in this country (cf Vidyajyoti 45 (1981), p. 152).

Now he opens to us the extraordinary wealth of living theology and deep spirituality revealed by the offices of the great festivals of the same tradition It comprises all the Sundays and Feast-Sundays from the beginning of the liturgical year proper until the 8th Sunday of Epiphany, as far as the mobile cycle is concerned. For the fixed feasts it begins with that of St Francis Xavier (an adaptation to the Indian context) and ends with the 19th February, the commemorations of both Saints Ephrem and Isaac (of Antioch ?), teachers of prayers.

One may wonder how the author has been able to produce such a translation, almost single-handed It was helped by some earlier work, including translations of a series of sacerdotal prayers made by Fr Bede Griffiths and Fr Francis himself, quite many years ago But all that has been revised and incorporated into the usual framework of the West-Syrian ethos

As known otherwise, the Syrian liturgies are really theological poetry in action Often poetry helps us to go beyond mere affirmations and statements in order to penetrate somehow the mystery In particular, one often realises more deeply how "present" today are those events of salvation, because through poetry their character as ever active today is better made alive.

The introduction to the whole book is worth reading calmly and reflexively It is a must for those who wish to make use of those offices and prayers for their own spiritual nourishment.

E. R. Hambye, S.J.

Camil Bulcke, S.J. — A Pioneer Missionary Priest

D. Bhatt

On August 17th, 1982, All-India Radio announced that the well-known Hindi scholar, Fr Camil Bulcke had expired in the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences in New Delhi. Describing his death, a Hindi writer wrote in *Dharam Yug*· "From the worldly point of view death had the victory, but in this victory death was defeated. Though he is no more bodily with us, Fr Bulcke is living — living through his work and dedication in the hearts of innumerable people."[1] The Hindi world and Indologists were shocked to hear this sudden and unexpected death It was evident in the way they reacted to the sad news All the important Hindi writers who were in Delhi attended his funeral Dr Raghuvansh, his intimate friend, and Swami Satyaprakash, a well-known scholar scientist and Arya-Samaj leader, were present All-India Radio and Television broadcast programmes on the personality and work of Fr Camil Bulcke. Condolence and memorial meetings were spontaneously held all over the Hindi world Newspapers, specially Hindi Dailies and Weeklies — such as *Din Maan*, *Saptahik Hindustan*, *Dharam Yug* — gave not only a coverage of his death and illness but published a series of articles bringing out the man and his work.

A Missionary Priest

No other Christian missionary priest has ever received so much appreciation in the Hindi papers as did Fr Bulcke He was not only a great scholar and an enthusiastic protagonist of Hindi, in the eyes of non-Christians he was also a Christian saint, Sannyasi, Sage, Guru, Baba and above all a friend who reigned in the hearts of people. In Ranchi and wherever he travelled in North India Hindus, young and old, flocked to meet him and take his advice, not only on matters of Hindi scholarship but also about their moral and spiritual problems.

Camil Bulcke was born in West Flanders in Belgium on September 1st, 1909. In 1930 he came first in Engineering studies at Louvain University. His family background and studies augured well for his future career. But, responding to the call of God, he joined the Society

1. Cf. *Dharam Yug*, September 12th, 1982, p. 53.

of Jesus on September 13th, 1930, and expressed his desire to go to India as a missionary — which he did in 1935, soon after completing his philosophical studies in Valkenburg, Holland. It cost him much to leave his parents, especially his mother whom he loved tenderly. He used to say: "I see my mother in Sumitra of Manas who had to sacrifice her beloved son for the sake of serving the Lord." But he had committed himself totally to his master. In India he pursued his ecclesiastical studies in St Mary's Theological College, Kurseong. He was ordained a priest in 1941.

From the moment he set foot in it Fr Bulcke loved India, and especially North India, the field of his missionary work He took Indian citizenship in 1950 and became an Indian to the core. In his own words: "I was born in Belgium, now I am an Indian." And in those of Dharam Vir Bharati, the Editor of *Dharam Yug*: "Fr Camil Bulcke, having become a member of the Society of Jesus and taken the vow of celibacy, totally committed himself to the service of humanity, fully adopted India and immersed his personality in Indianness"[2] He expressed his firm conviction thus:

> We have in view educated Hindus who are often very little attached to the external trappings of Hinduism, but who represent Indian Hindu culture at its best. It is on that culture that Christianity will have to be grafted if it is ever to flourish in India These people have a spiritual maturity of their own... Since they are mature, it is up to them to assimilate Christ's truth, to incorporate it into the truths they already possess and so to realize themselves that Christ fulfils and completes their religious culture[3]

Camil Bulcke resolved to identify himself, to the extent possible, with the people of North India and it was his firm conviction that this identification could be achieved only through the hard work of studies in Indian culture and languages, and above all in making Hindi his own language, which he kept up till the last days of his life He did his B.A in Sanskrit in Calcutta University and went to Allahabad, the seat of Hindi studies, in 1945, to do the M A Dr Dhirendra Verma, the head of the department, had misgivings about the ability of a foreigner to do an M.A. in Hindi. But all his misgivings vanished when he gave him a test on a verse of Vinaya-Patrika With the encouragement and guidance of Dr Dhirendra Verma, he wrote a scholarly thesis for his Ph.D. on the Story of Rama — Its Origin and Development. This thesis is acknowledged as a unique and monumental work on the theme — The Story of Rama. Outstanding authorities have said: "In the field of Hindi research on Ram Charit Manas, Bulcke's work is supreme. His is the last word on the subject."

2. Cf. *Dharam Yug*, September 5th-12th, 1982, p. 32.
3. See THE CLERGY MONTHLY SUPPLEMENT, Volume 6 (1963), p. 279.

After completing his thesis in 1950, Fr Bulcke joined St Xavier's College, Ranchi, as Head of the Department of Hindi and his room became for him "the place of asceticism in studies". He has contributed innumerable scholarly articles to the Hindi Encyclopaedia and in scholarly journals of India and abroad. One of his most renowned and widely spread works is his English-Hindi Dictionary, which he first published in 1971. Through this dictionary he became an authentic interpretor of Hindi terminology and a famous figure in the world of the Hindi language.

Lover of the Bible

Right from the days of his ecclesiastical studies in Kurseong Camil Bulcke saw it as his vocation to spread the Good News through the Bible. He said:

> We should make present to them the *truth of Christ* in its most simple expression; put before them the teaching of Christ in the words of Christ.... All words about Christ are secondary to the words of Christ themselves...."[4]

He wrote *The Saviour*, a book that went through many editions. Later on he translated it into Hindi under the title *Muktidata.* As a result of ten years of hard work he brought out in Hindi the full New Testament in 1977. He prepared also the three volumes of the Lectionary (in 1972, Vol I; in 1973, Vol. III; in 1974, Vol II). Besides these, he brought out the Hindi Psalter in 1980. On the request and with the authorization of the Bishops of the Hindi Region he then began improving the text of Fr Wald's "Old Testament". He had planned to complete the work by July 1982. Till the last days of his life he devoted to it all his time and energy. Even during his last sickness, his only concern was, as he himself said to his friends, to live to complete the Bible. He pleaded with God to grant him 400 hours for this. Providence took him away when 150 pages were still to be done.

Fr Bulcke wanted to give his best to the Church in India. A Bible translation had to be simple, yet dignified in language, and at the same time rooted in the cultural context. Its Hindi had to be lucid, modern, and so avoid sanskritised terminology. Abiding by these principles, Fr Bulcke has produced a style of Hindi for which the Church in India can be proud. In tributes paid to him, passages from his translation of the Bible have been quoted to show to what perfection he had arrived. The Bible had been translated into Hindi in earlier times. But, as a Hindi scholar remarked, these previous translations smacked of 'foreignness' to the Hindi world. Though they had value

4. See THE CLERGY MONTHLY SUPPLEMENT, Volume 6 (1963), p. 280.

from the religious point of view, they were not acceptable to the Hindi reading public. Fr Bulcke's merit lies in bringing the Bible and its style into the mainstream of Hindi. It has been acknowledged by Hindi Pandits that in his translations he has not only propagated the Bible but has given Hindi a new style. His translation will remain as a lasting contribution to Hindi literature itself The fact that cultured non-Christians not only appreciate, but relish Bulcke's Bible is a tremendous breakthrough.

A Christian Saint

All his studies on the story of Rama stemmed from his commitment to missionary life They were not prompted by mere academic interest, they were aspects of his mission. Far from distracting him from his vocation and commitment to Christ, these studies strengthened and enriched his faith and were integrated into it. He believed that two sacred books, the *Mahabharatha* and the *Ram Charit Manas*, were representative of what was best in Indian culture. The *Ram Charit Manas*, in particular, was at the core of North Indian culture, with its moral and religious values These values, particularly as enhanced in the writings of Tulsidas, fitted well within his faith. When he was sick in Patna, two books lay at his bedside, the Bible and the *Ram Charit Manas*. There was no trace in him of syncretism or ecclecticism, all did not have the same importance. But the *Ram Charit Manas* and *Vinaya Patrika* — in his words, "a remarkable document of religious experience" — were considered by him a great help for understanding Christian values in the cultural context of India There were no compartments in his personality As Hindus saw it, he was a Christian saint who valued the Hindu religious books. In his many public appearances he always spoke as a person deeply committed to Christ, never hiding his true identity He admitted no compromise in this matter, always wearing the cassock. Nor did the respect Hindus had for him suffer from his being a Christian priest, rather, it added to it. It did seem strange to some of them that a Christian priest be requested to preside at the Ramayan Mela which was held on a national level at Chitrakoot on March 25th, 1981. His broad vision prompted him to accept this invitation and by it he rose in the mind of all above sectarianism and a narrow outlook. Wherever he went, it was clear to the people he met that he was not a devotee of Ram, but of Tulsi whom he recognized as a great saint. The values propounded in the great epic and in the works of Tulsidas prompted him to see in them a preparation for the Gospel. The attitude recommended by the Second Vatican Council to the sons of the Church in their relation to the followers of other religions found in him a perfect

expression. "In witness to the Christian faith and life", the Declaration *Nostra Aetate* said, "acknowledge, preserve and promote the spiritual and moral good, as well as the socio-cultural values found among them" (n. 2).

It is this openness of mind that prompted people to invite Fr Bulcke to symposia and seminars, held at national and international levels. In all of these he was an esteemed speaker and through them he spread and promoted values that build up the human community. His love for the *Ram Charit Manas* prompted a writer to extend to him what has been said of Valmiki himself: "As long as there will be rivers and mountains in this earth, the story of Ram will be spread. As long as the story of Ram is told, Baba Bulcke will not be forgotten."[5]

A Hindi Enthusiast

Fr Bulcke was a dedicated lover of Hindi and its literature. Two motives impelled him to this service. First, as a missionary, he could identify with the people whom he had come to serve, only if he adopted their language. His enthusiasm for Hindi was motivated by his sense of the apostolate. From the moment he came to the University of Allahabad he talked to people only in Hindi When Hindi speaking people, considering him a foreigner, addressed him in English, he was somewhat irritated and greatly annoyed, and replied: "I belong to the Hindi speaking people." His earnestness for Hindi won for him the hearts of people. Occasionally he even chided Hindi speaking people for not being proud of their mother tongue and faithful to it. Secondly, he strove throughout his life to improve the standard of the Hindi language and literature, and regarded this as a service to which he was committed by his very vocation. He served the cause of the language by being a member of committees for Hindi, instituted at the highest level by the Goverment of India.

Ajneya, a great writer, has described this service of Fr Bulcke to the Hindi language as 'Sadhu Seva'. In 1974, the same merited him the Padma Bhushan from the Government of India. In this field of service he was in line with great missionary figures, such as Beschi in Tamil Nadu and Matteo Ricci in China. He had understood that the Church is committed to all fields of human life. There was in him no room for mediocrity, and he well deserved the great reputation he enjoyed. His scholarly work, *Ram Katha,* is remembered not only as an excellent contribution in its field, but even more for its dispassionate search for the truth. He was and will remain a model of true research and of ecclesial commitment to all fields of human life.

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5. Cf. *Saptahik Hindustan,* September 12th-18th, 1982, p. 11.

Enthusiastic as he was for Hindi and Indian culture, Fr Bulcke was open to all other cultures as well. He knew four ancient languages (Hebrew, Greek, Latin and Sanskrit) and spoke Dutch, French, German and English fluently. His wide reading and sensitive mind made him a man of universal culture.

Lover of People

Camil Bulcke was no scholar in an ivory tower. He will be remembered not only for his scholarship and service to Hindi, but even more for his ability to love people in all walks of life and to win their love. He was no withdrawn, other-worldly sannyasi, but one able to share the joys and sorrows of the people he met. A paper described him as a "divine flame of human compassion".[6] Whoever came into contact with him loved him, and it is significant that people vied with one another to claim him as a friend and a member of their family. As Dr Dharam Vir Bharati has put it: "We two, of different temperaments, of different faiths and of different walks of life, became acquainted. This was gradually changed into a deep friendship and then developed into an intimate relationship as between family members." Another very close friend, Dr Raghuvansh, still wonders how they could become so friendly from the first time they met. To the children in the families he visited Fr Bulcke became a real "uncle", "Tavu". Friendship came to him naturally, but sometimes he had to pay the price for his disinterested love. He gave much of himself and received much in return. This is the secret whereby he endeared himself not only to Hindi writers and scholars, but also to their family members. His ability to cultivate friendship showed him to be fully and deeply human.

Missionary Apostolate

Fr Bulcke wrote, and he often said: "The humblest way to cooperate with Providence is to use the natural psychological means in a supernatural spirit."[7] He used all his talents and energy in the service of the Lord. For the last many years he had a difficulty of hearing and suffered bad attacks of asthma Yet he remained undaunted in his commitment and his spirit never failed. The key to his missionary achievement is his clear vision of the goal he had set himself, and his singleness of purpose in attaining it, no matter what frightfully hard work it implied. He had sometimes to face opposition from his local superiors and confreres, but in implementing his vision submitted totally to the voice of the Spirit manifested to him through his Superior General. On

6. Cf. *Din Maan*, August 29th, 1982, p. 8.
7. See The Clergy Monthly Supplement, Volume 6 (1963), p. 279.

occasions he incurred also the displeasure of narrow-minded non-Christians, but he was committed to the truth He spent himself totally for the Lord

His deep study of the works of Tulsidas, chiefly the *Ram Charit Manas* and the *Vinaya Patrika*, had convinced Fr Bulcke that the deep moral and spiritual values they contained were in harmony with the Gospel, even though they needed to be purified and elevated Realizing that millions of people of North India loved the *Ram Charit Manas* (which, he thought, had appropriately been called the "Bible of North India") as the source of inspiration for their moral and religious life, he meant to assume Tulsidas into his own apostolic purpose He prepared himself for this task by a prodigious study of Tulsidas himself and of other sacred writers Once recognized as the greatest authority on Tulsidas, he was able to address hundreds and thousands of people and, as a priest, to influence them deeply He exemplified in his apostolate what the Decree *Ad Gentes* of Vatican II says beautifully of the missionary activity of the Church "Whatever truth and grace is already found among the nations as a sort of secret presence of God it restores to Christ, their author So whatever good is found sown in the hearts and minds of men, or in the rites and cultures proper to various peoples, is not only saved from destruction, but is healed, ennobled and brought to perfection for the glory of God " (n 9)

It might be asked How many people did Fr Bulcke convert ? He considered this an irrelevant question, for he did not regard conversion as a mere change of religious allegiance He was convinced that the more deeply imbued a man's life is with genuine moral and spiritual values, the closer he is to God and to Christ The final step he left to the Holy Spirit

Fr Bulcke helped his hearers towards a true *conversio cordis* He felt that "lack of charity in our relations with the Hindus and various manifestations of a religious superiority complex on our part...constitute a reason why the relations between the two communities are bad" [8] We hurt people and antagonize them, and so they close themselves to our influence He opted for a positive approach and emphasized what is good He developed an attitude of respect for the spiritual riches of the Hindu tradition, and so was able to reach the hearts of people. He was accepted by them because they recognized in him not only a scholar but an open heart This was his vision of the apostolate to which his Master had called him This vision marks him out as one of the great missionaries of our region, as a pioneer showing to others how doors and hearts can be opened.

8. See THE CLERGY MONTHLY SUPPLEMENT, Volume 6 (1963), p 281

Liturgical Inculturation Questioned

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

FR Pablo Gil has raised in these pages[1] some problems regarding inculturation in India that deserve a serious answer I venture to present *an* answer to them which will reflect my own way of looking at things at the moment More authoritative voices have already spoken in the past on the question in general and on some of the specific problems raised,[2] and it is evident that the question of inculturation and its various forms is one to which the Church in India, not individual persons, will eventually have to give an answer.

OM Revisited

The first question refers to the meaning of OM and it divides itself into two one, what is its meaning for Hindus, the initiated and the uninitiated, two, whether it is "proper to display the OM symbol in our churches and chapels" ?

Over one year ago I wrote my personal opinion on both the questions in these pages[3] There I said that in my opinion OM has as such no "meaning", because it is not a "word" in the ordinary linguistic sense It is a pure sound *symbol*, used in many senses according to various contexts But it does have a primary connotation, beyond the other evocations that have accrued to it through the centuries The literature I have consulted makes it clear that the origin of OM must be sought in the Vedic ritual recitation,[4] and most authors speak of OM as the

1. VIDYAJYOTI 45 (1981), pp 410-412.

2 Besides the teachings of Vatican II one can consult *EN* 63, the Declaration of the All India Seminar on the Church in India Today, II and III (cf *All-India Seminar on the Church in India Today*, Delhi, CBCI Centre, 1969, pp 241-247), the Declaration of the Nagpur Theological Conference on Evangelization, nn 7-29 (cf J PATHRAPANKAL, (ed), *Service and Salvation*, Bangalore, TPI, 1973, pp 3-9), the Declaration of the All-India Consultation on Evangelization, nn 15, 39, 41, 45, 90 (cf *Light and Life We Seek to Share*, Bangalore, Church Extension Commission, 1973, pp 371-383), the Conclusions of the Interdisciplinary Research Seminar on Ministries in the Church in India, nn 44-47 (cf D S AMALORPAVADASS (ed), *Ministries in the Church in India*, New Delhi, CBCI Centre, 1976, pp 527-529).

3 VIDYAJYOTI 45 (1981), pp 232-238

4 This seems to indicate that any reference to Śiva and Pārvatī sought to be presented as the meaning of OM must be very secondary and derivative, if it exists at all,

symbol of the Vedas or of the *śabda-brahman* At the popular level the Hindus I have consulted answered me that it stands for the well-known triad Brahmā-Viśnu-Śiva, or God as creator, preserver and destroyer The Apte Dictionary has this entry·

> OM. ind. 1. The sacred syllable *om* uttered as a holy exclamation at the beginning and end of a reading of the Vedas, or previous to the commencement of a prayer or sacred work — 2 as a particle it implies (a) solemn affirmation and respectful assent (so it be, amen !), (b) assent or acceptance (yes, all right) , (c) command, (d) auspiciousness, (e) removal or warding off — 3 Brahman
>
> This word first appears in the Upanishads as a mystic monosyllable and is regarded as the object of the most profound religious meditation In the Māndūkya Upanisad it is said that this syllable is all that has been, that which is and is to be, that all is *om*, only *om* Literally analysed, *om* is taken to be made up of three letters or quarters the letter *a* is Vaisvānara, the spirit of waking souls in the waking world, *u* is Taijasa, the spirit of dreaming souls in the world of dreams, and *m* is Prajñā, the spirit of sleeping and undreaming souls, and the whole *om* is said to be unknowable, unspeakable, into which the whole world passes away, blessed above duality In later times *om* came to be used as a mystic name for the Hindu triad representing the union of the three gods, *a* (Viṣṇu), *u* (Śiva) and *m* (Brahmā) [5]

Fr George Sebastian, in a letter to the editor of VIDYAJYOTI,[6] throws further light on the syllable "as used in the day to day life and worship of Hindus" He stresses the Hindu origin of the phoneme and its evocation of totality and divine dimension when prefixed to the names of individual gods and of impersonal things, respectively He thinks that as a "living divine sound", it stands for the whole of Hinduism (adding that it is also used, though more rarely and in a more restricted sense, in Buddhism, Jainism — and he forgets Sikhism) Hence he finds its use in Christian prayer unadvisable He also mentions that it is used as a charm to influence the gods and as a spell on demonds.

From all this it seems clear that the significance of the symbol varies according to the context in which it is used For my part I see no *a priori* theological objection to it being used in a "new", i e , a Christian context, especially since the primary connotation of the symbol is, as I believe, 'revelation' (*śabdu-Braman*)

However, I have also pointed out that there may be a sociological or practical problem in its Christian use In so far as in popular thinking OM is a specific symbol of the Hindu community and is often closely (but not exclusively) linked with the "Hindu gods", Viśnu, Śiva and Brahmā, its appropriation by Christians may cause suspicion

5 V S APTE, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, revised and enlarged edition, Vol I, edited by P K GODE and C G KARVE, Poona, Prasad Prakashan, 1967, s v. Cf, similarly, M MONIER-WILLIAMS, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, s v

6 VIDYAJYOTI 45 (1981), pp 447-448.

or even resentment. As I mentioned, much seems to depend on the concrete circumstances of the place where the symbol is used, especially the degree of osmosis that has taken place between traditional Christian culture and the Indian or Hindu environment In an atmosphere of open dialogue and mutual acceptance there would seem to be little difficulty from this angle Also in situations of isolation, like in Christian monasteries, there would seem to be no fear of conflict In a situation where the different communities of faith coexist in strict mutual isolation, or, even worse, in mutual suspicion, sentitivity to the situation would probably advise not to seem to make our own what sociologically and by tradition belongs to the other community Behind this problem there lies the deeper problem of the kind of "community" the Church should be in a situation of pluralism such as we have in India. whether we should be satisfied with being just another separate "community" vis-à-vis all other groups, or should aim at expressing universality and fostering a "fellowship" with the existing cultural groups and religious traditions. The question was already asked last century by Indian converts whether one cannot in India be a "Hindu-Christian" [7]

I have not yet touched on an aspect of OM that disturbs Fr Gil and his visiting priest, the contention that "for the initiated Hindu OM represents the sexual union of Shiva and his consort". The idea has been expressed a number of times in Christian polemic literature, often in a very crude form It is quite possible that for some group or other OM acquires a sexual connotation — anything can have it But neither the Apte Dictionary I have quoted, nor the Monier-Williams Dictionary, nor the *Hindi Viśvakosh* (with its learned article by the renowned Mahomahopadhyaya Pandit Gopinath Kaviraj and its highly technical explanations of OM in the Yoga tradition), give any reference to sexual symbolism Even B Walker's two-volume *The Hindu World*, with all its sexual obsessions, does not give to OM any such connotation The Hindus I have consulted knew nothing about it and Fr Sebastian's letter, based on obvious experience in the field, makes no reference to it I did find, however, in a difficult text of the Sanskrit dictionary in seven volumes, the *Vācaspatyam*, a reference to

7 The question was already raised last century by Protestant converts (cf K BAAGO, *Pioneers of Indian Christianity*, Bangalore CISRS, 1969) This position was boldly and articulately defended by the Catholic convert Brahmabandhav Upadhyay (cf B ANIMANANDA, *The Blade*, Calcutta, Roy and Sons, p 71f, and a forthcoming edition of his writings) It has more recently been studied by P. TURMES, "Samaj Dharm and Sadhan Dharm" in THE CLERGY MONTHLY SUPPLEMENT 6 (1962-1963), pp 330-334, H STAFFNER, "Conversion to Christianity from a Hindu Point of View", in THE CLERGY MONTHLY 36 (1972), pp. 3-15, H STAFFNER, "May a Convert Retain His Spiritual Identity ?" in VIDYAJYOTI 40 (1976), pp 356-362, H. STAFFNER, *The Open Door*, Bangalore, ATC, 1978.

mithuna ("intercourse"): in OM there is the *mithuna* of the Rg and the Sāma vedas. The meaning seems to be that the poetic verses and the sung melodies of the two great sacrificial collections attain their symbolic unity in the humming of the OM. The context is clearly the Vedic ritual and the sexual allusion purely metaphorical. The author, Sri T. Tarkavachaspati, explains the aptness of the metaphor in that, as in sexual union desires are satisfied, so also in the ritual recitation the desires of the devotee are fulfilled. There is, incidentally, no mention of Siva and Parvati, in this connection. Unless I am seriously misinformed, the sexual connotation of the symbolic syllable OM is, if any, very remote or restricted to some esoteric group or sect.

Sitting Posture at Mass

The second question Fr Gil asks is whether it is "proper" for a priest to offer the great sacrifice of the Mass sitting cross-legged on the floor, considering the fact that the offerers in the Hindu mahayajñas offer the sacrifice standing. I believe that the factual information given by Fr Gil is correct. in the great yajñas, the libations are poured by the *adhvaryu,* standing in one particular corner of the fire-altar (while in domestic rituals the priest is normally seated). But I would question the presupposition of the query. I do not think that adaptation or inculturation means copying detail by detail what is done in the tradition of the past, without any creativity and readaptation to the Christian life We have to incarnate our Christian life *creatively* and in accordance to our needs. The Mass is not a copy of the Hindu yajñas: it is a sacrifice; but it is also a meal, and a song of praise The priest is not the equivalent of the *adhvaryu* who performs the oblations while reciting short formulas. He is also the *hotṛ* who proclaims the praises of the divine presence, and, partly at least, the udgātṛ who sings and the *brahmā* who presides over the whole performance, and who surely remains seated. He is even, in a sense, the "sacrificer", the *yajamāna* who in Hindu worship is a lay person, e g , the king, representing the whole country. Whose posture should the priest copy ?

If we think in terms of creative adaptation, perhaps the question of the "proper" posture of the priest during Mass loses its meaning. Apart from the positive legislation that we may have on the matter, the "proper" posture will depend on many circumstances of the celebration, e.g., the size of the congregation and their own posture. For large gatherings in Cathedrals or open spaces it is clear that often the standing position will be more advisable so as to ensure the visibility of the priest or bishop who presides over the worship, unless a rather high rostrum is available. A small group celebration is quite a different matter. It is true that theologically the "small group celebra-

tion" does not differ from the mass-rally Eucharist, both being the *mahā-yajña*, the great sacrifice of Christ. But the actual modality of the worship is quite different and the small group Eucharist comes functionally closer to the domestic rituals than to the great śrauta sacrifices of old. The Christian community will adopt a posture that is meaningful and expressive of worship, and it can certainly be said that sitting cross-legged (or, preferably, in *padmāsan* posture for those who can) is meaningful in our culture and expressive of worship and meal, as well as of meditation, when placed in a religious contect.

There are also practical reasons in favour of the sitting-on-the-floor posture. For one thing, it leaves the place of worship unencumbered with heavy (and expensive !) benches and creates an atmosphere of simplicity, symbolic of man's spiritual poverty and receptivity before the great mystery of God The community also knits itself more into a congregation, is less regimented by not being divided by wooden partitions row after row. If the congregation sits on the floor, it is natural to avoid the continuous changes of posture, rising and sitting, customary in the traditional liturgy. And if people sit on the floor throughout the celebration (which can be done with great reverence and include special gestures of adoration at the high points of the celebration), it would seem odd for the celebrant to keep standing, except perhaps in very large congregations. The sitting posture of the priest seems in this case advisable from a practical point of view And it is certainly a very Indian way of bodily expression in a context of prayer.

All these are mere practical suggestions about which each Christian community has to decide according to circumstances. In India our bishops have given us guidelines by granting permission for the sitting posture in congregations that are prepared for it. No group is *obliged* to adopt it. No group also should feel obliged to use chairs or benches Let us use responsibly the freedom the Lord gives us, without seeking uniformity or imposing our choices on others, without slavish imitation of the ways of other religious groups, but with a sense of responsibility in our task of incarnating the message and life of Christ in the cultural and social traditions of our country.

Adoptation — For Whom ?

This leads me to the third question in Fr Gil's query: *cui bono* ?, he asks. As old Christian communities do not seem to be helped by "Indian" customs, and new converts may rather opt for a break with their past; as also Hindus may possibly be further alienated rather than attracted by an attitude on our part which they may consider suspicious

— *cui bono* ? For whom is adaptation ? I may appear facetious, but I would like to answer: *Jesu Christi bono* ! I think that this answer is supported by the doctrine of Vatican II Speaking of the Church's Missionary Activity, the Council says·

> Whatever truth and grace is already found among the nations as a sort of secret presence of God it frees from evil influences and *restores to Christ*, their author, who overthrows the reign of the devil and wards off the manifold malice of sin. So whatever good is found sown in the hearts and minds of men, or *in the rites and cultures* proper to various peoples, is not only saved from destruction but is also healed, ennobled and brought to perfection, for the glory of God ... (*A G*, n 9)
>
> ...Following the economy of the incarnation, the new Churches, rooted in Christ and built upon the foundation of the apostles, take to themselves in a wonderful intercourse all the riches of the nations which have been given to Christ as his inheritance (cf Ps 2, 8) They should borrow from the customs, traditions, wisdom, learning, arts and sciences of their own people everything which can help to confess the glory of the Creator, to illustrate the grace of the Saviour and rightly order the Christian life (cf *L G*, n 13) (*A G*, n 22).

Clearly the Council derives the principle of inculturation from a deep faith in the uniqueness of Christ, his incarnation and his exaltation as the Lord of history. The principle is based on the universality of Christ As such it is unquestionable, and discussion can only be on *how* to implement it and on its implications and demands today. I am not happy with the metaphors suggested by Fr Gil, even though they may well describe the attitude of new Christians "at the affective level" Inculturation, as the word suggests, is not a matter of transplant, with or without roots, to a new soil, but of *sowing the seed* of the Gospel (cf Mk 4,3) into the field of human history, just as the Word became flesh, and indeed Jewish flesh

Fr Gil thinks it necessary to preserve the "differentness" or distinctness of Christian worship, at the risk that some of its symbols be not clearly perceived by the people. It is true that an element of "mystery" is "always present in our relationship with God". But the mystery of the liturgy consists in the very presence of Jesus as sacrament of God's love among us; it need not be placed in the symbols we use. Precisely because inculturation flows from the incarnation, the parallel drawn with the attitude of Christians converting to Hinduism seems irrelevant. We are not presenting a cultural religion, but the mystery of "Christ Jesus who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men" (Phil 2, 5-7).

Is there further need to justify the principle of inculturation ? If inculturation is today an "effort", and therefore looks somewhat

artificial, the reason is that an anomalous situation needs to be corrected. Christianity has not grown out of a "seed sown in the soil" but has been transplanted with all its cultural trappings. The artificiality of the present effort at inculturation corresponds to that of the process by which the Church was first transplanted. Otherwise, inculturation is the most natural way for the Gospel to grow. If the seed of the Good News of Jesus Christ is allowed to sink into a cultural soil and to grow under the influence of the Spirit in an atmosphere of freedom, inculturation ceases to be a specific task. It just happens. If we recover this authentic evangelical freedom, the problems of the resentment of old Christian communities, of reactions of new converts and of Hindu suspiciousness will solve themselves. The only question is: Do we dare to take the risks that the Son of God took ? Do we dare to let "incarnation now"[8] happen ?

8. Title of the May-June 1976 issue of *Jeevadhara*

Martyr of Charity

Pearl of Great Price. The Life of Mother Maria Skobtsova 1891-1945 By Sergei HACKEL. *London, Darton, Longman and Todd,* 1982 Pp 160 £ 4 95

When the first edition of this book was published in 1965 under the title *One of Great Price*, it was acclaimed as one of the best contributions to modern Russian spirituality Now the biography has become more comprehensive and we can understand better the personality of Mother Maria

Liza Pilenko, daughter of a renowned botanist, married in 1910 Dmitrii Kuz'min-Karavaev, a strong leftist socialist, though later on he could not persuade himself to side with Lenin The marriage did not prove successful According to the Orthodox tradition they could and did divorce in 1916 After they left their motherland, sharing the fate of the nearly 2 million émigrés in 1917-22, she settled down in Paris He became a Catholic, while remaining entirely faithful to the Russian tradition. He joined a seminary and was ordained a priest, but was never a Jesuit as the author writes (p 84) I happened to know Fr Dmitrii fairly well and regarded him as a man remarkably gifted, deeply religious-minded, and an authentic Russian.

Liza re-married, but her second marriage came to an end with her own religious profession in Paris. Her conception of monastic life was so personal as to defeat all canons, Eastern and Western She became the soul of several organizations founded to help the poorest, left-over and sick Russian emigrés Her biography throws much light on that extraordinary odissey But the nuns who had gathered around her left her in 1939, though without any bitterness, to start a more regular convent

The German occupation of Paris (1940-44) was hard for all its inhabitants, but the Russian settlers suffered the most, either because they kept their sympathy for their motherland, especially after the German invasion of Russia in June 1941, or simply because they refused to be coaxed into helping the occupants

Mother Maria, with other Russian émigrés, among whom her spiritual adviser, Fr Dmitrii Klepinin, worked hard to save as many Jews as possible This was the chief cause of their arrest by the Nazis After a period of camp-life in France, Mother Maria with other women was taken to the Ravensbruck concentration camp in East Germany There she died in a gass chamber on the 31st of March 1945

She fell a victim to the Nazi regime because of her abiding compassion and action on behalf of suppressed humanity "I have an inborn sense of compassion At times it overwhelms me with such force that it dispels all my peace of mind If I have someone to pity I am prepared to do anything for them . ", she once wrote (p 40) Her death as a martyr of charity reminds us once more that there is no greater love than to give up one's life for one's neighbour

E R. HAMBYE, S.J.

Notes

Reconciliation in India — Report of a Seminar

Reconciliation was the theme of the annual meeting of the Indian Theological Association at Bombay, October 22-24, 1982 About 35 members had gathered from all parts of the country Nine papers, which had been circulated earlier to the participants, were presented and were commented upon by one of the members These looked at the theme from various points of view· Scripture, Liturgy, other religions (Hinduism, Islam and Tribal Religions), pluralism (ecclesial and national), the human and social sciences (psychology and Marxism). Further discussion focussed on four topics linked to the theme· a theology in the Indian context, socio-political and economic tensions, intra-ecclesial groups and liturgical celebration All this sharing of views was embodied in a final statement.

Tensions in the economic, social, political and religious fields in the country provide the context for a reflection on the reconciling mission of the Church, awareness of which is growing in the Christian community (cf. 2 Cor 5, 17ff) Jesus Christ proclaimed a Kingdom of freedom, fellowship and justice which the Father wants us, his children, to build up on this earth in the power of the Spirit This reconciling service, however, is a constant process and effort since tensions keep arising. It is also a constant challenge [1]

In meeting this challenge the Church has to be in continuing dialogue with other religious traditions of India which have valuable elements to offer for a rich synthesis *Islam* emphasises the need for submission to God's will as the basis for peace "Harmonization of our will with the will of God brings about harmonization of different spheres of life under an all-embracing ideal" While certain ideas like expiation and vicarious suffering may be absent in the Islamic tradition, repentance and reconciliation are very much part of it, especially among the Sufis. The aim of the, often misunderstood, *jihad* was the creation of an egalitarian and just moral order in the realm of politics. Because Islam obligates the Muslims to justice in all human relationships, it can be a force for peace.[2]

Hinduism stresses in its myths and theological reflection the ultimate establishment of *Dharma* or a moral world order. Universal harmony is the end of a process and internal to this process is a continuing struggle against injustice and sin which has not only personal, social and structural, but also cosmic and even ontic dimen-

1. J. PATHRAPANKAL, "Reconciliation and the Kingdom of God". This and the following references are to the papers presented at the Meeting. They will be available to the public before the end of December, according to the secretariat.
2. C. W. TROLL, "Islam and Reconciliation".

sions. Evil is never absolute. The process of integration embraces all sorts of dualisms and alienations and appears as creative play (*lila*).[3] The *tribal religions* of India present a clear social ethic. To consider this religionless is really a misinterpretation arising from the introduction of dichotomous categories into tribal awareness.[4]

There seems to be a growing emotional resentment among the oriental Churches in India against the "domination" by the Latin Church which denies them freedom of operation all over the country. A juridical approach to the problem and the emergence of Rite as one more divisive factor in the Church would be disastrous. A respect for pluralism and a concern for inculturation and the reality of a local Church should guide any attempts towards an equitable solution.[5] Caste, communal, linguistic and religious tensions in the country deserve even more serious attention Reducing them all to class tensions may be an over-simplification However, only a broad humanistic secular framework that respects pluralism can provide an adequate background to the Church's involvement in the struggles of the people.[6]

Psychological reflection on phenomena like freedom, responsibility, ambivalence, creative tension, wholeness, acceptance, etc., can help us to have a more adequate idea of the concrete psychodynamics of reconciliation [7] On the other hand Marxism challenges us to explore more seriously the reality of structural sin, the need for a theology of struggle and the place of violence in a morality of ends and means [8]

Looking at the sacrament of penance in this context leads us to confess that it often appears as a reconciliation with one's conscience only. An over-emphasis on juridical symbols, a lack of the social dimension and the absence of the Word of God in celebration make the liturgy of reconciliation very inadequate A renewal of the sacrament must make it a paschal celebration of the community — a community deeply involved, in the power of the Spirit, in the building up of a new humanity and a new world [9]

During the discussions the idea that their mission of reconciliation may lead Christians into a liberative struggle on the side of the oppressed in the country emerged

A more systematic and thorough analysis of all the aspects of the Indian situation as a starting point, and more time for common reflection at the meeting itself could have helped a deeper and more relevant reflection

M AMALADOSS, S.J.

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3 M AMALADOSS, "Reconciliation in Hinduism"

4 A KANJAMALA, "The Sacrament of Reconciliation in the Context of Indian Tribal Culture"

5. V. F. VINEETH, "Struggle for Autonomy in the Church and the Call for Reconciliation".

6. K C ABRAHAM, "Reconciliation and the Struggle for Identity of the Different Christian Communities and Groups in India".

7. S DIAS, "Psycho-Theology of Reconciliation"

8. J D'MELLO, "Rethinking Reconciliation — Lessons from Marxism".

9. P. PUTHANANGADY, "The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation: A Critical Examination".

Hegel on Indian Philosophy

The appearing within the last two years of at least three important studies on the above topic — one in French by M. Hulin, one in German by W. Halbfass, and the present one in English by an Indian Jesuit[1] — shows the permanent interest aroused by Hegel's critical evaluation of the achievements of Indian thinkers. Hegel (1770-1831), whose adult years coincided with the first development of Indology (dated 1784 when Sir William Jones founded *The Asiatic Society*), read avidly all the information which an increasing band of Sanskrit scholars was then producing at a remarkably fast rate, he excerpted it, pondered it and endeavoured earnestly to integrate it within the framework of his own developing system. Viyagappa surveys extensively (pp. 11-60) these sources of Hegel's information about India. In the rest of his book, he analyses minutely, contextually, structurally and with great penetration all the texts which present Hegel's view of Indian philosophy and religion. These are essentially: 1) a basic text from the second (1827) edition of *The Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences in Outline*; 2) Hegel's review of W. von Humboldt's essay on the Gîtâ; 3) passages from his posthumous works, i.e., from the differently reported versions of the lectures he gave during the period 1821-1831 on Philosophy of Art, Philosophy of Religion, History of Philosophy, and Philosophy of History. These texts — here examined in their mutual relationships as well as in the overall context of Hegel's works — witness to his fascination for, and his continuous confrontation with, his Indian sources. Although they were scanty, piecemeal, miscellaneous and far from adequate, his genius succeeded astonishingly in penetrating through them to the core of Hindu religious thought: "Brahman, the pure unity of thought within itself".

To understand how he integrated it within the scope of his system requires a brief statement of his view of the *conceptual function* of the different religions towards the making of 'the concept of religion'. He graded them according to the quality of their religious awareness. In Bauer's version, this gradation is as follows for the nature-religions: 1. The immediate religion of magic, 2. The religions of 'The split of consciousness within itself', the several forms of which are: a) the religion of measure (Chinese Taoism) in which "the Substance is known as simple foundation and as immediately present in a finite and contingent thing", b) the religion of fantasy (Hinduism) where "the abstract unity is more closely related to the Spirit, since this abstract unity is present as the very ego", c) the religion of being-within-itself (Buddhism) in which "the concretization and presence of Substance exists and lives in a *single* individual, and the unbridled unfolding of the unity, which marked the preceding form, is at least abrogated in as much as it is *annihilated* and liquidated", 3. The nature-religions 'on the crossroads to the religion of freedom' which are: a) the religion of the good or the light (Zoroastrianism), b) the religion of pain, and c) the religion of riddle. Of all nature religions, Hinduism alone is

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1 **G. W. F. Hegel's Concept of Indian Philosophy**. By Ignatius VIYAGAPPA, S.J. Documenta Missionalia, 14. *Roma, Università Gregoriana Editrice*, 1980. Pp. xii-295. Lire 15 000

designated in terms of a faculty of intelligence (fantasy) at the level of representative thinking (*Vorstellung*).

For Hegel, fantasy operates as the transformer of immediate intuition (*Anschauung*), bound to the object in space and time, and spiritual thought (*Denken*) which reaches the concrete immanence of concept. It is intelligence in its faculty of 'inwardization' (*Erinnerung*) and 'image-formation' (*Einbildung*). Namely, it relates itself to the object by *thinking* and *reforming* the intuited, so that the object now receives a way of being within the subject as freed from the external forms and thus universalized and abstracted from particularity The result is a meaningful sign, a universal representation (*Vorstellung*). Images and universals are then freely combined and subsumed under higher universals according to the dictates of the self-determining spirit for further progress towards full conceptual thinking. All this is what he calls 'fantasy' or 'creative imagination' (*Phantasie*) As limited to the creation of 'signs', it is not yet 'conceptual thinking'; yet, it is "the centre in which the universal and being, its own and what is picked up, the internal and the external, are completely welded into one".

In his philosophy of religion, Hegel transposes this psychology of the mind's progress towards the freedom of thought unto the religious progress of the 'divided' consciousness of man in world history towards the reconciliation of 'the divine' and 'the secular', a reconciliation where "the Infinite manifests itself in the finite, and the finite in the infinite", so that "neither of them constructs a special kingdom of its own" Hinduism, 'the religion of fantasy', is the specific historical form in which the Absolute meets, and is met by, the community of the Hindu people as an historical moment in the course of the dialectical progress of man towards that reconciliation In Hinduism, a great advance is made over the 'immediacy' of magic religion: here, the divine is 'inwardized' and objectivized through a form "purified from externality and sense-immediacy" and is given "the significance of the *universal Spirit*", as 'abstract unity' the Substance is here not bound to a mere individual but is the unity of all. In this 'excellent form' of religion, we have "this self-composed-being, Brahma, the pure self-consciousness, this separation, where it is abstracted from all that is concrete, natural and desirable and even from mental representation" Yet, the Brahman is not only the universal Essence of things but "it is also considered the particular essence of things. When Brahma says (in the Gîtâ): 'I am the lustre, the luminosity in metals, the Ganges among rivers, life in the living, the intelligence in the intelligent', etc., it means that the individual is put aside. Brahma does not say: 'I am this metal, the rivers, etc., as they exist here and now in their immediacy'. The lustre itself is not the metal but the universal, the substantial abstracted from the individual; it is not any more the *pan* (as in '*pan*theism': 'all' in the sense of 'everyone'); the all means the all as sum total of the individual".

However, and this is the limitation of Hinduism, in that supremely abstracted Brahman the particular simply disappears; man himself is simply merged into it. Of the three moments of conceptualization,

position of the Universal, counter-position of the particular, and synthesis of the particular with the Universal, the third is lacking. The concrete, the free, is not made really to unify with the Abstract but simply to be swallowed up into its abstraction Instead of containing "the wealth of all content", the Brahman is only "the absolute Thing". It lacks the principle of individuality and subjectivity The Hindu Absolute is not the 'concrete and absolute' form of thought, because it is acosmic and "in it the empirical all of the world disappears". In India, abstract thinking, combined with a wild and fertile fantasy, degenerates into a massive polytheism instead of paving the way for the real formation of the absolute conceptual form of the Spirit or Idea

The Hindu historical reality corresponds to the spiritlessness of that acosmic Brahman Subjective freedom emerged through the caste system, but was soon to be stifled because the Hindus did not know that "man as man is free", and this they did not know because their Brahman, 'pure unity of thought', lacks 'subjectivity' Thus the very foundation of political freedom in community has been lacking in India

It is obvious that Hegel's understanding of Hindu thought suffers deeply from the limitations of his time and of his personality The scantiness of his information, the prejudices of his culture (but he reacted against some of them), the rigidity of his system, the pride of his Europeo-centricism and the very ambition of his endeavour of comprehension, limited and coloured his vision and conditioned his estimation

The author does not fail to characterise the vulnerability of Hegel's achievement In his conclusion (pp 251-258) he brings forth the expected corrections in the light of today's scholarship on India. Yet, he also stresses not only how much Hegel was indebted to India for the elucidation of his own 'speculative' philosophy, but also the extent to which his criticism should be recognized as a service to India which remains a land of extremes and wonder in many respects To Fr Viyagappa himself we are indebted for a clear, thorough and complete presentation of a great moment in the encounter of the European with the Indian mind

R De Smet, S.J.

Book Reviews

Sacred Scripture

The Two Horizons. By Anthony THISELTON *Exeter, The Paternoster Press,* 1980 Pp xx-484. £ 15

Prof Torrance in the Foreword remarks that one of the central concerns in contemporary theology and biblical studies has been the interest in linguistics and hermeneutics The question of interpretation raises questions about the nature of knowledge, the use of language, and the scientific and ontological presuppositions operative in the mind of the exegete He describes Dr Thiselton's book as an exploration of "how philosophy can provide us with tools (a) to elucidate the hermeneutical task, (b) to unfold the meaning of parts of the New Testament, and (c) to lead us beyond semantics and traditional linguistics by enlarging the interpreter's prior understanding and conceptual capacities" (p xi)

Dr Thiselton mentions that "the goal of biblical hermeneutics is to bring about an active and meaningful engagement between the interpreter and text, in such a way that the interpreter's own horizon is re-shaped and enlarged" (p xix) This "active and meaningful engagement between interpreter and text" can be achieved only by recognizing the limits dictated by the thought world of the author of the text which is being interpreted, and the thought world of the interpreter These limits of thought world are called here 'horizon' (metaphorically) The two Horizons are those of the author of the book, and the interpreter, or the text and the reader

It is impossible to give a detailed description of the contents of this massive work, a broad outline must suffice Part I, "Introductory Questions", after examining the nature and scope of the subject, considers the relationship of Wittgenstein to Heidegger, Bultmann and Gadamer in the field of hermeneutics Part II, "Broader Issues in New Testament Hermeneutics", develops three fundamental issues 1 Hermeneutics and History, viz, the awareness of the historical distance between text and reader, seen as the most direct incentive for hermeneutical reflection, 2. Hermeneutics and Theology, viz., the legitimacy and necessity of hermeneutics defended against fundamentalistic objections, 3 Hermeneutics and Language, viz, the relationship between hermeneutics and present-day general linguistics These two parts (pp 1-139), as a matter of fact, serve as an introduction to Part III (pp 140-427), the core of the book as indicated in the sub-title of the book. New Testament Hermeneutics and Philosophical Description with special reference to Heidegger, Bultmann, Gadamer and Wittgenstein A detailed examination and discussion of the thought of these four key figures is given However, other authors engaged in the same studies of hermeneutics and linguistics are also cited and discussed

First some brief comments are made on various themes of Heidegger's thought (pp 143-204) Understandably greater attention is devoted to the evolution of Bultmann's hermeneutical search (pp 205-292) Thiselton stresses the complexity of Bultmann's position to whom he does justice by distinguishing genuine criticism from unfounded judgments There follows a discussion on Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics and their implications for New Testament interpretation (pp 293-326) To this is added a survey of the later Heidegger, Gadamer and the New Hermeneutics (pp 327-356) Thiselton judges that these trends can offer a positive contribution, at the same time he recognizes that they are rather one-sided

The hero of the work is Wittgenstein (pp 357-427) These chapters are the most original part of the whole study, according to the author himself "I have tried to offer some original comments on the work of Heidegger, Bultmann and Gadamer But it is in the chapter on Wittgenstein that I believe my most distinctive work is to be found, partly in the comments on the significance of Wittgenstein for hermeneutical theory, and partly in my use of his writings to clarify conceptual problems in the New Testament itself" (p xx) Thiselton centres more particularly on the later Wittgenstein with his emphasis on language as a form of life Various instances are given of how this philosophy

can be applied to passages of the New Testament. No definite solution is offered but the view is expressed that this philosophy of 'grammar' may shed new light on old problems, such as the biblical notions of flesh, faith, truth, justification by faith, etc. A first Additional Note briefly considers Wittgenstein's attitude towards structuralism In his judgment we should exercise caution before welcoming 'structuralism' into biblical studies as a proved and entirely valid method of exegesis. A second Additional Note investigates in what way Wittgenstein's ideas could bring some light in the debate about biblical authority

A brief concluding chapter summarizes the main points of the discussions (pp 428-431)

Prof Torrance in the Foreword summed up his evaluation of Thiselton's work in these words "The book shows thorough familiarity with the many authors examined and a first-hand acquaintance with the work of writers in linguistics, New Testament language and literature, and contemporary philosophy" (p xi) The reader will subscribe to this valuation We also must admire the persisting labour involved in such research Though one may have the impression that at the end of the book we get practically only a recapitulation of the matter seen so far, without feeling any nearer to the solution of the problem, still we must keep in mind that the problem is complex and intricate and possibly in recent years may have been made even more involved unnecessarily At the same time we must question whether Wittgenstein's philosophy really can and should be transposed to the Bible For the Christian the Bible is not just any book or any piece of literature but God's word to men This aspect does not figure in the discussion and is only just touched upon in Appendix B on Wittgenstein and the debate about biblical authority As regards the bibliography one may regret that Catholic contributions to the hermeneutical discussion seem to have been overlooked somehow

The book is a revision of a doctoral dissertation In a thesis a minute detailed analysis is required On the other hand one might perhaps expect that the revised version in view of a more general readership would contain les detailed analysis and more synthetis surveys. This would have preventec the book from giving the impression od being rather crammed. The book doesf not lend itself to easy reading but it can be ignored only at one's own risk.

J Volckaert, S.J.

Themes in Old Testament Theology. By William Dyrness *Exeter, The Paternoster Press*, 1979 Pp 252 £ 3

The author, associate professor of systematic theology and OT theology at the Asian Theological Seminary in Manila, offers in this book a set of program notes for students, on the self-revelation of God, the nature of God, creation and Providence, man and woman, sin, the Covenant, the Law, worship, piety, ethics, wisdom, the Spirit of God, prophecy, the hope of Israel The exposition is simple and expressive

In the Preface the author regrets that "a lack of expertise will no doubt be evident in the pages that follow Despite every effort to remain true to the data of the text, I have at times fallen into the trap of systematization" (p 11) A minimum of systematization is expected in biblical theology as well as in systematic theology One will regret only that the author, apparently approaching the OT as the work of one writer, often underplays the richness of the text In his systematization unfortunately he not seldom imposes upon the text predetermined ideas or categories, as can be seen in the following quotations "while a reference to the Trinity is probably not specified by the plural (i e, *Elohim*), one cannot rule out this association" (p 46), "there is strong support for such belief (i e, creation *ex nihilo*) even if it is nowhere made explicit in the OT" (p 65)

The author's standpoint is positively conservative This is shown even in passages where literary criticism is not strictly called for from the point of view of biblical theology Referring to the two creation narratives of Gen 1-2 the view is taken that "the material all comes from the Mosaic period and reflects two perspectives on creation (perhaps coming from two older traditions) that complement each other In the first account, though the intent is not scientific in the strict sense, the order of creation in general parallels the order that modern geology assigns for the relative age of the earth and its inhabitants " (p 66) Regarding the historicity of the early chapters of Genesis, "inasmuch as the question is of theological significance", the author takes pains to show that to assert that "this history does not come to us in the form of scientific history is

not to say that it does not give us information about *what actually happened...* The Genesis accounts derive their exemplary quality precisely from their actually having happened .." (p. 104) Rom 5, 12-21 which puts "the disobedience of Adam on exactly the same level as the obedience of Christ" is adduced to substantiate the claim that the creation narrative is not "a nice story that never actually happened"

On the other hand we find excellent expositions, v g , regarding the Wisdom literature, or the development of the theology of the Spirit

J Volckaert, S J

Mark· Evangelist and Theologian. By Ralph P Martin *Exeter, The Paternoster Press*, 1979 Pp 240 £ 3 50

This excellent review of Markan scholarship exposes concisely and evaluates the various approaches made to the Gospel throughout the centuries from the early Church's acceptance of the Gospel as an authoritative document seen mainly as biographical, to the critical approach of Form-Criticism and Redaction-Criticism The different theories are presented in such a way as to bring out their relationship to each other, developing along various hypotheses Rejecting Wrede's view that theology has destroyed historical reminiscences, R. P Martin holds that "while (the Gospel) is a record of history in its literary form, its chief characteristic is that it is theology cast in a narrative style of writing" (p 103) As regards the question of dating the Gospel, he notes that the key to a solution lies not solely in the historical setting of Mark's community, theological considerations have to be taken into view and should be given first preference The author does not give us a mere survey of scholarly opinions, he adds his own approach to some discussed points One appreciates particularly his view about the circumstances in which the Gospel was written In his view the Gospel was written to counter, within the churches founded by Paul, tendencies towards docetism Paul himself had already reacted against these trends, they had become more dangerous after the death of the Apostle In this working-hypothesis we find some interesting, fine analyses of the text On the other hand, one may wonder why the theory of Mark's paulinism is so easily accepted

The most instructive part of the book is perhaps the exposition of Mk's Christology. Jesus is the Son of God, in the OT sense, viz., a special agent of God chosen and invested with a mission, who offers obedience unto death. Jesus, however, stands in a unique relationship to God as his beloved one, the Son par excellence The paradox of glory in suffering is central in Mark, the Church is bound to follow in the footsteps of the Master on the road of suffering and exaltation "It is faith which glimpses the true worthiness of Jesus and appreciates his true stature. Partial recognition of who he is was found in the days of his ministry, but in its fulness the evaluation awaits the resurrection It is *only in the light of his post-Easter* vindication and glory that he can be adequately known for what he is — Son of God and Lord Mark writes from that perspective, and in so doing inevitably sees the human Jesus as a figure who is both man and more-than-man since what he was incognito and known only to percipient faith in the days of his flesh has become plainly visible since his enthronement, and is the accepted article of the church's confession" (p 139) Mark expresses Paul's message of the cross "in a language which unmistakably 'grounds' it in the *historical ministry*, rejection and death of the divine Son" (p 162)

The concluding chapter briefly treats of the abiding relevance of the Gospel for the Church The quest of Jesus as historical person ought to be resumed because of today's danger of Docetism, but also in view of having a basis for calling people to 'decision' "Our reconstruction of Jesus takes on a new meaning as it submits to the control of the kerygma and so is delivered from pious sentimentality, idle speculation and psychologizing fancy" (p 226) The Servant Jesus must exhort and sustain the servant Church called to "a life of discipleship to Jesus which entail(s) the acceptance of the cross in persecution and a following of him in the darkness of unexplained and unrelieved suffering" (ibid)

The purpose of the book is "to relate the Gospel to the general reader's understanding more than to offer another theory to the scholarly fraternity" (p 9) Remaining within the limits set for the work, the author gives us an excellent introduction to Mk The book is a reprint, in limp cover, of the original edition of 1972 with some corrections and additions The bibliography though updated remains purposely "trimmed to manageable size and kept to a mini-

mum, consonant with the book's purpose" (p 9)

J VOLCKAERT, S J

Luke· Historian and Theologian By I Howard MARSHALL *Exeter, The Paternoster Press*, 1979 Pp 238 £ 3 50

The Foreword exposes the three main suggestions the book is intended to make 1 Luke's theology, closely related to that of his sources, 2 the key concept in the theology of Luke 'salvation', 3. a critical assessment of some contemporary trends in Lucan study

I *The theme of Luke as historian* is developed in chs 2-3 Luke shows himself to be a historian who wants to give a faithful portrayal of the ministry of Jesus (Lk) and the life of the early church (Acts) The point is not "History or faith ?" (ch 2), history and faith belong together (ch 3), faith does not 'historicize' events, the events generate faith Luke's theology rests upon history in the sense that the salvation of God is revealed in historical events, theology reflects upon those events and establishes their significance The chief historical event in which salvation is revealed is the ministry and person of Jesus Luke had no direct contact with the historical Jesus, he had to depend on the tradition, both oral and written, he has proved himself faithful to that tradition, though not uncritically, his theology reflects motifs which were already present in his sources After examining the concept of history and the relationship of history to faith Dr Marshall concludes "that although we have stressed the factual nature of the early preaching and its crystallization in the Gospels, this does not mean that no place has been left for faith Our point is that the events which faith interprets as divine acts must be real, historical events, or otherwise they cannot be interpreted at all The facts may be tested historically, but the ultimate decisions are matters of faith It is faith which sees the resurrection as an act of God, it is faith which goes on to confess 'Jesus is Lord' But 'if Christ has not been raised faith is in vain' Luke was a historian because *he was first and foremost an Evangelist* he knew that the faith which he wished to proclaim stands or falls with the history of Jesus and the early church" (p 52).

2 The key concept in Luke's theology is 'salvation'. This notion is developed in chs 4 to 8. First a brief examination is made of recent approaches to Luke's theology, more particularly of the view that the first Christians lived in hope of an imminent parousia of Jesus (Conzelmann, Grasser, Schulz, Wilckens and others) The main topics of the section are a) the doctrine of God and his plan of salvation which forms the basis of Luke's theology, b) the revelation of salvation in Jesus as recorded in the Gospel, c) the proclamation of salvation by the early church as recorded in Acts, d) the way in which salvation becomes a reality in the experience of believers Jesus' message brought deliverance of sin and the joy of the kingdom of God, through the preaching of the apostles this message is offered to man By accepting the message one obtains forgiveness of sin and the gift of the Spirit One might wish to find here a more developed reference to the universality of salvation which surely is an important element in Luke's theology of salvation

3 Throughout the work a critical assessment is made of some contemporary trends in Lucan study Mention has been made already of Conzelmann's view that Luke wrote under the influence of the delay of the parousia Another point which comes under attack is the view of Luke's '*early catholicism*" (Kasemann, Vielhauer) The qualification 'early catholic' is taken in a pejorative meaning Some authors discover in the later books of the New Testament a growth towards the type of Christianity found in the second century and later, in which great significance is attached to the church as an organized institution Luke is not seen as a late pupil of Paul, "he is the first representative of an early nascent catholicism, a theology which is essentially different from that of primitive Christianity" (Kasemann) Luke's theology is considered to be inferior to Paul's theology Dr Marshall on the other hand argues that, though the theologies of Paul and Luke are unmistakably different, "the attempt to find fundamental differences and incompatibilities between Luke and Paul have failed It is not the case that Luke has misrepresented or misunderstood Paul, although he has not developed many *significant* Pauline motifs In particular, the case for an existentialist Paul alongside a salvation-historical Luke cannot stand Pauline theology is rather, as P Borgen has argued, the pre-supposition for Lucan theology" (p *220*) Dr Marshall closes his book with the remark "Our final estimate of Luke is a positive one.

He is not the initiator of a decline from the early Christian message of Paul, he is his worthy follower" (p 222)

The first part of the book, viz, Luke as historian, is weaker than the second part, Luke as theologian, which contains many interesting points The exposition is clear and proceeds methodically At times, however, one might wish to see a few more nuances in the exposition or refutation One may wonder also whether the exposition of the relationship Luke-Paul is not over-simplified, though one has to take into account the readership intended by the author which in the present case necessarily limits the opportunity of giving proofs or instances for views advanced or opinions contested The book is to be recommended as a biblical theology solidly rooted and well presented

J VOLCKAERT, S J

Parables for Now — More Parables for Now By Edmund FLOOD *London, Darton, Longman and Todd,* 1981 Pp. 98 and 102 £ 2 50 each volume

These two small volumes are welcome The style is lively The exposition reflects the author's familiarity with the geographical and historical setting and the social conditions underlying the parables In his introductory chapter of the first book the author gives us a general idea of how and why Jesus spoke in parables These considerations give a background for the reading of the parables "In his parables Jesus tried to help people understand what he was doing They are his self-portrait They show us what he thought about himself They offer this so that we can come close enough to him in our approach to life to share with him" (p 2) They are "an invitation to escape for a while from everyday life and to step into a world of make-belief" (p 2) They give us the 'feel' of an attitude so that we experience for ourselves how human a situation is, or how wrong, etc, and then make us reflect on our own situation

In the first book the author starts with the parables that are largely concerned with Jesus himself What did this baffling man think he was doing ? In the first five parables Jesus was trying to help people assess the evidence about that The other six parables considered in the first volume are about some implications of following Jesus Then the last chapter draws out what we have already seen about Jesus' desire to communicate the good news by considering what he said about that and by noticing a widespread misunderstanding.

In the second book we look at the practical consequences of joining Jesus We could call it the Christian agenda Four themes are treated our relationship with God (ch 2), people, possessions and ourselves how we need to see them (ch 3), the time is now (ch 4), the choice (ch 5) The concluding chapter gives some impressions collected by reading the parables

For each parable the author gives a 'reconstruction' of the original text so far as possible, i e, he tries to render in modern language the idiomatic expressions of the text which the general reader might miss This 'reconstruction' is followed by a simple commentary to which are added a few reflections for prayerful reading Technical explanations designed only for the specialist are kept at the end of the book in the form of 'end-notes', they are well referenced and up-to-date, they are kept to a minimum

I would like to add only two remarks First, regarding the "prodigal son" "A man 'has' two sons", both are wrong one is lost but found back, as long as the elder son does not change his attitude the father 'has' not yet his two sons In parallel with the next two parables of the 'lost' sheep and the 'lost' coin why not rather stress the attitude of the father who has 'lost' a treasure, especially as the commentary refers to the attitude of God towards sinful Israel, in Hos 3, 19 ? Lk 15 speaks of the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost son/sons I would have liked the same aspect of 'loss' (though it is not exclusive in the parables) stressed more also in the exposition of the parables True, this aspect has not been totally omitted but is perhaps minimized

As regards the "shrewd steward" I hesitate to think that the master who "once more has been cheated by this rogue" would praise him "for the deftness and wisdom he has shown in a tight corner" Could the shrewdness of the agent not rather consist in the wisdom of sacrificing his own 'commission' or profit in view of gaining the sympathy of the farmers rather than to get out of the tight corner by cheating ? However, these are details where opinions may differ These remarks are in no way meant to detract from the merit of these two very welcome studies.

J. VOLCKAERT, S.J.

Papacy and Ecumenism

The Papacy in the Modern World 1914-1978. By J. Derek HOLMES *London, Burns and Oates,* 1981 Pp ix-275 (No price given)

It is no easy task to give both a faithful and readable account of the 64 years of recent papal history covered by this book In many ways we are still too close to the events to be able to interpret them in a way which is both enlightened and objective

Despite this basic drawback — proximity — Fr Holmes, professor of Church History at Ushaw College, near Durham, N England, has brought out a very good survey of the period It covers the pontificates of Benedict XV, Pius XI, Pius XII, John XXIII, Paul VI, including the one-month papal ministry of John Paul I

Due to the central role played by the modern papacy, the book is also a history of the modern Church This, of course, is approached from the view-point of the popes and their close advisers, but much is provided to help towards a better knowledge of what happened in the Catholic Church during the period

The author is well acquainted with the many, often enormous problems faced by the Church There have been the two wars with the problem of what attitude the papacy should take, as Catholics belonged to the opposite camps, the rise of the "isms", including communism, fascism and nazism, raising acute questions for the papacy, especially in Italy, the great problem in France of the "Action Française", which deeply divided the Catholic elite in that country

The launching and first developments of Vatican II are well summed up One could hardly expect from the author a fuller treatment Books and articles abound on the topic, and their production is not likely to abate soon But facts and reactions much less known, sometimes even totally unknown, come to light in this book, particularly as regards papal relations with fascism and nazism, the pope's attempts at saving as many Jewish lives as was humanly possible, resistance of German Catholics against nazism

Every Seminary library should acquire this book, and I am sure no reader will regret having perused it

E R HAMBYE, S J

Peter and the Single Church. By John DE SATGÉ. London, *SPCK,* 1981 Pp x-182. £ 4.95.

In his preface the author writes· "I believe that the time is now ripe for entering into full communion with Rome as she stands That conviction underlies this book, which therefore gives a highly personal treatment to its subject" (p x). Who in this case is strongly advised to enter into full communion with Rome ? The Anglican Church, to whom the author belongs

Truly the Roman claims, though more nuanced and less rigid since Vatican II, remain a challenge for any tradition that originated from the 16th-century Reformation None of the difficulties, obstacles and theological hurdles has escaped the attention of the author But none deters him from presenting the Roman case forcibly — which he does with the best available documentation

The result is a real treatise which could be entitled "Papal Claims attractive and repulsive" He concludes "If Anglicanism is to lose its independence within the Catholic unity, it will be because its vocation has been fulfilled" (p 162) The book is written at a time when the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission has published a series of remarkable documents, now collected in *The Final Report* In these documents a remarkable degree of agreement is reached, even on the troublesome question of the Papacy and its role

Anglicanism has often given to itself the role and vocation of a 'bridge Church' One could hardly blame John de Satgé for trying to bring that role to fulfilment Perhaps in God's Providence Anglicanism is destined to show that it is possible for a Church to unite with Rome without losing its own identity Thus the *via media* of the Tractarians, outrun by Newman, could become the *via unitatis*, leading to unity in diversity

E R HAMBYE, S J

Pastoral Theology

God Alive. Priorities in Pastoral Theology By Graham LEONARD, *London, Darton, Longman and Todd,* 1981. Pp viii-88 £ 2 50

The book presents Bishop Leonard's lectures on pastoral theology at the university of Durham The bishop examines the pastoral theology of St Paul, particularly as seen in his pastoral care for Christians at Corinth Though there are obvious differences between the Corinth situation of Paul's days and our situation today, his pastoral concerns,

such as the maintenance and building up of the Church as the body of Christ, the relationship between authority and freedom in the Spirit, etc., are the same The way he deals with them in the Spirit helps us to decide upon our pastoral priorities in view of giving guidance for authentic Christian living If the task of pastoral theology is to apply the Gospel so that men and women may be able to grow in union with God by conformation to Christ, it must take into account both the situation of the people who are to live their faith and the content of the Gospel

Bishop Leonard deals especially with a theme of central importance, namely love. Our understanding of this theme in biblical revelation is of tremendous pastoral significance Discussing authors like Nygren and Martin D'Arcy on the same subject, he presents some significant pastoral insights for pastoral theology Eros and Agape are lived out by Christians in an integrated way In Christian living, love is always "Give and Take" Eros, with its *anima* and *animus*, is redeemed by Christian agape The bishop, stressing agape as the great dynamic principle of pastoral praxis, speaks of suffering love and the place of the cross God loves a bent world Not to suffer is not to love In the words of Dorothy Soelle, avoiding suffering is avoiding human relationships and contact altogether

Pastoral theology should concern itself with a habitual awareness of God, alive and active (a term preferred by the bishop to recollection), a sense of mystery as understood in the Bible, grace, a sense of the eternal purpose for which man was created, with discipline and sacrifice The lectures contained in this slim volume deal with central pastoral concerns with great simplicity and clarity, but not without depth

S AROKIASAMY, S J

Charismatic Renewal

Stewards of God's Grace. By Siegfried GROSSMANN Translated by Michael Freeman *Exeter, The Paternoster Press*, 1981 Pp 192 £ 4 20

This is a rewarding book to read. Grossmann presents us with a comprehensive and systematic review of the charismatic movement It is a balanced evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the movement There are wise guidelines for the directions it could take and is taking The author points out that there seems to be basically three reactions to the movement. For some it is one of the greatest revivals in the history of the Church. In others it arouses pathological fear, anger and resentment and they view it as a crisis of eschatological dimensions There are yet others who, while not being opposed to the charismatic movement in principle, are tired of hearing about charisms "We need the Spirit of God", they say, "but not this continual talk about charisms" (p 9). Adopting a position between the first and the third the author in a very balanced and lucid manner swiftly and succintly recounts the history and the theological importance and relevance of the charismatic movement With Ed Schweizer he sees various forms of church structure being categorised as the *Palestinian structure* (a church with official positions and a strong hierarchy), and the *Johannine structure* (a Spirit-led church without such offices), and the *Pauline structure* (a church occupying the middle ground) He states that from time to time the charismatic Johannine structure has manifested itself in the Montanists, the monks and mystics, the Waldensians, the Reformation, the Huguenots, Pietism, Methodism, etc He views the present movement not as "something completely new, but a significant swing in the direction of a charismatic church structure" (p 23) The brevity of the chapter is its weakness The chapter on Pentecostalism is concise and well written. The chapter recalling the historical development of the contemporary charismatic movement, while presenting a panoramic view of the development, is defective in that some countries are not taken note of, nothing is said about some of the leading personalities in the movement, no mention is made of the more important literature and other contributions of the movement to music, dance, etc Part one concludes with an insightful chapter on the significance and relevance of the charismatic movement to the present age In the author's estimation it is a sign of hope in an age of unprecedented change and crisis of orientation But he wants the movement to be integrated into and subjected to the guidance of the churches.

The second part of the book is devoted to a scriptural and theological analysis of the Holy Spirit with an intended emphasis on the Gifts and the Fruits of the Holy Spirit These chapters are insightful, lucid and practical. The author confronts controversies, exaggera-

tions and denials with the evidence of the NT Critics, enthusiasts, and bystanders would profit from reading his balanced analysis and assessment of Baptism of the Spirit and the various other gifts which are classified under General Gifts, Gifts of the Word, Gifts of Action and Gift of Discernment. The book concludes with a third section in which guidelines are given for the integration of the charismatic movement into the life of the church The need and necessity of the Gifts to manifest themselves in the Fruits of the Spirit is emphasised Also insisted on is service in and for and under the guidance of the church Inherent dangers are pointed out Pastors will profit from reading and mulling over his suggestions for charismatic practice, for making the church more charismatic, for getting many more responsibly involved in a more participated liturgy and in parish apostolates A minor criticism would be concerning the bibliography It makes no reference to the many other works available in English The book is ecumenical in nature and could be profitably read by Christians of all denominations, be they critics, bystanders or enthusiasts

Charles CARVER, S J.

Prayer

The Courage to Pray. By Karl RAHNER and Johann B METZ *London, Burns and Oates*, 1980 Pp 87 £ 2 50

This little book by two eminent theologians of our day is simple, devout and yet profound Both of them have the ability to touch the heart and stimulate thinking and they do so in this book They invite and challenge us to pray Metz in the first part expresses ideas on the courage to pray Quoting the German Synod text *Our Hope* he says "The name of God is graven deeply in the history of mankind's hopes and sufferings It brings enlightenment and is obscured, is revered and denied, misused and disgraced, yet never forgotten" (p 5) Convincingly he states that "The history of mankind seen as popular history is basically the history of religions, and religious history in final analysis is the history of prayer" (p 6) He then simply and succinctly describes some forms of prayer, insisting that we have the courage to bring the whole of ourselves to prayer — joy, sorrow, lament, supplication, protest. He sees prayer also as the courage to accept responsibility In answer as to whether it is worthwhile to pray in the face of so much evil, Metz replies. "We can and should pray after Auschwitz because even in Auschwitz, in the hell of Auschwitz, they prayed" (p 9)

Building on the fact that prayer expresses the solidarity of mankind, Rahner establishes reflectively our solidarity with the dead and consequently with the saints He then argues that, far from being contradictory and unbecoming, prayer to the saints is becoming, though not necessary A Barthian comment is an occasion for him to state that our praying "to" the saints is in a very true sense a praying "with" the saints on account of our solidarity with them "We do not invoke the help of the saints because otherwise they would not intercede on our behalf, rather in their eternal salvation they do nothing but intercede for us" (p 71) This last statement is inaccurate in that the saints besides interceding are involved in adoration, praise and thanksgiving

It is a devotional book worth reading though a bit on the expensive side

Charles CARVER, S J

Oriental Liturgy

Resurrection, Life and Renewal A Theological Study of the Liturgical Celebrations of the Great Saturday and the Sunday of Resurrection in the Chaldaeo-Indian Church By Varghese PATHIKULANGARA *Bangalore-Kottayam, Dharmaram Publications* and *St Thomas Apostolic Seminary*, 1982 Pp xxx-501 Rs 80

There is no doubt that the Easter Festival as making present among us the Paschal Mystery is and must be the centre of the liturgical experience of all Christians This is still more so with the Eastern Churches For, whenever they remained faithful to their apostolic roots and original ethos, the Easter Festival formed the core of their liturgical life, in as much as the latter is the very heart of their spiritual life

We owe now to Fr Varghese a study in depth of the offices for Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday, as performed for ages in the East-Syrian tradition It is to this tradition that the Syro-Malabar Church belongs It is a tradition which enjoys a very rich Biblical content, and which often echoes that sense of the Paschal joy that the early Christians felt

Continued on p 538. *See also p* 552

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